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CARWIN, THE BILOQUIST,

AND

OTHER AMERICAN TALES

AND PIECES.

BY

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN,

AUTHOR OF

WIELAND, ORMOND, ARTHUR MERVYN,

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE deep interest excited by the works of this Author, already known in England, arises chiefly from the skill with which he has developed the hidden springs and complicated machinery of human actions ; and from the talent he has displayed in tracing the intricacies of the chain which connects causes apparently trivial with stupendous effects. Unlike most other writers, his modes of thinking, the systems of ratiocination with which he invests his characters, and the peculiarities arising

from the state of society in which his scenes are laid, are more the objects of our admiration or attention than the incidents or themes of his fictions. The incomplete state, in which some of the following posthumous pieces have been left, is therefore the less to be regretted.

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CARWIN, THE BILOQUIST.

CHAPTER I.

I AM the second son of a farmer, whose place of residence was a western district of Pennsylvania. My eldest brother seemed fitted by nature for the employment to which he was destined. His wishes never led him astray from the haystack and the furrow. His ideas never ranged beyond the sphere of his vision, or suggested the possibility that to-morrow could differ from to-day. He could read and write, because he had no alternative between learning the lesson prescribed to him, and punishment. He

was diligent, as long as fear urged him forward, but his exertion ceased with the cessation of this motive. The limits of his acquirements consisted in signing his name, and spelling out a chapter in the Bible.

My character was the reverse of his. My thirst of knowledge was augmented in proportion as it was supplied with gratification. The more I heard or read, the more restless and unconquerable my curiosity became. My senses were perpetually alive to novelty, my fancy teemed with visions of the future, and my attention fastened upon every thing mysterious or unknown.

My father intended that my knowledge should keep pace with that of my brother, but conceived that all beyond the mere capacity to write and read was useless or pernicious. He took as much pains to keep me within these limits as to make the acquisitions of my brother come up to them, but his efforts were not equally

successful in both cases. The most vigilant and jealous scrutiny was exerted in vain ; reproaches and blows, painful privations and ignominious penances had no power to slacken my zeal, and abate my perseverance. He might enjoin on me the most laborious tasks, set the envy of my brother to watch me during the performance, make the most diligent search after my books, and destroy them without mercy when they were found ; but he could not out-root my darling propensity. I exerted all my powers to elude his watchfulness. Censures and stripes were sufficiently unpleasing to make me strive to avoid them. To effect this desirable end, I was incessantly employed in the invention of stratagems and the execution of expedients.

My passion was surely not deserving of blame, and I have frequently lamented the hardships to which it subjected me ; yet, perhaps, the claims

which were made upon my ingenuity and fortitude were not without beneficial effects upon my character.

This contention lasted from the sixth to the fourteenth year of my age. My father's opposition to my schemes was incited by a sincere though unenlightened desire for my happiness. That all his efforts were secretly eluded or obstinately repelled, was a source of the bitterest regret. He has often lamented, with tears, what he called my incorrigible depravity, and encouraged himself to perseverance by the notion of the ruin that would inevitably overtake me, if I were allowed to persist in my present career. Perhaps, the sufferings which arose to him from the disappointment were equal to those which he inflicted on me.

In my fourteenth year, events happened which ascertained my future destiny. One evening I had been sent to bring cows from a meadow, some miles

distant from my father's mansion. My time was limited, and I was menaced with severe chastisement, if, according to my custom, I should stay beyond the period assigned.

For some time these menaces rang in my ears, and I went on my way with speed. I arrived at the meadow, but the cattle had broken the fence and escaped. It was my duty to carry home the earliest tidings of this accident, but the first suggestion was to examine the cause and manner of this escape. The field was bounded by cedar railing. Five of these rails were laid horizontally from post to post. The upper one had been broken in the middle, but the rest had merely been drawn out of the holes on one side, and rested with their ends on the ground. The means which had been used for this end, the reason why one only was broken, and that one the uppermost; how a pair of horns could be so managed as to effect that which

the hands of man would have found difficult, supplied a theme of meditation.

Some accident recalled me from this reverie, and reminded me how much time had thus been consumed. I was terrified at the consequences of my delay, and sought with eagerness how they might be obviated. I asked myself if there were not a way back shorter than that by which I had come. The beaten road was rendered circuitous by a precipice that projected into a neighbouring stream, and closed up a passage by which the length of the way would have been diminished one half: at the foot of the cliff the water was of considerable depth, and agitated by an eddy. I could not estimate the danger which I should incur by plunging into it, but I was resolved to make the attempt. I have reason to think, that this experiment, if it had been tried, would have proved fatal; and my father, while he la-

mented my untimely fate, would have been wholly unconscious that his own *unreasonable demands had occasioned it.*

I turned my steps towards the spot. To reach the edge of the stream was by no means an easy undertaking, so many abrupt points and gloomy hollows were interposed. I had frequently skirted and penetrated this tract, but had never been so completely entangled in the maze as now: hence I had remained unacquainted with a narrow pass, which, at the distance of an hundred yards from the river, would conduct me, though not without danger and toil, to the opposite side of the ridge.

This glen was now discovered, and this discovery induced me to change my plan. If a passage could be here effected, it would be shorter and safer than that which led through the stream, and its practicability was to be known only by experiment. The pass was narrow, steep, and overshadowed by rocks. The

~~sun~~ was nearly set, and the shadow of the cliff above obscured the passage almost as much as midnight would have done. I was accustomed to despise danger when it presented itself in a sensible form, but, by a defect common in every one's education, goblins and spectres were to me objects of the most violent apprehension. These were unavoidably connected with solitude and darkness, and were present to my fears when I entered this gloomy recess:

These terrors are always lessened by calling the attention away to some indifferent object. I now made use of this expedient, and began to amuse myself by hallooing as loud as organs of unusual compass and vigour would enable me. I uttered the words which chanced to occur to me, and repeated in the shrill tones of a Mohock savage, "cow! cow! come home! home!" These notes were of course reverberated from the rocks which on either side

towered aloft, but the echo was confused and indistinct.

I continued, for some time, thus to beguile the way, till I reached a space more than commonly abrupt, and which required all my attention. My rude ditty was suspended till I had surmounted this impediment. This being accomplished, I was at leisure to renew it. After finishing the strain, I paused. In a few seconds a voice, as I then imagined, uttered the same cry from the point of a rock some hundred feet behind me; the same words, with equal distinctness and deliberation, and in the same tone, seemed to be spoken. I was startled by this incident, and cast a fearful glance behind, to discover by whom it was uttered. The spot where I stood was buried in dusk, but the eminences were still invested with a luminous and vivid twilight. The speaker, however, was concealed from my view.

I had scarcely begun to wonder at this

occurrence; when a new occasion for wonder was afforded me. A few seconds, in like manner, elapsed, when my ditty was again rehearsed, with a no less perfect imitation, in a different quarter. To this quarter I eagerly turned my eyes, but no one was visible: the station, indeed, which this new speaker seemed to occupy was inaccessible to man or beast.

If I felt astonished at this second repetition of my words, judge how much my surprise must have been augmented when the same calls were a third time repeated, and coming still in a new direction. Five times this ditty successively resounded, at intervals nearly equal, always from a new quarter, and with little abatement of its original distinctness and force.

A little reflection was sufficient to shew that this was no more than an echo of an extraordinary kind. My terrors were quickly supplanted by delight. The motives to dispatch were forgotten, and I amused myself for an hour with talk-

ing to these cliffs; I placed myself in new positions, and exhausted my lungs and my invention in new clamours.

The pleasures of this new discovery were an ample compensation for the ill-treatment which I expected on my return. By some caprice in my father I escaped merely with a few reproaches. I seized the first opportunity of again visiting this recess, and repeating my amusement; time, and incessant repetition, could scarcely lessen its charms or exhaust the variety produced by new tones and new positions.

The hours in which I was most free from interruption and restraint were those of moonlight. My brother and I occupied a small room above the kitchen, disconnected, in some degree, with the rest of the house. It was the rural custom to retire early to bed, and to anticipate the rising of the sun. When the moonlight was strong enough to permit me to read, it was my custom to escape

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from bed, and hie with my book to some neighbouring eminence, where I would remain stretched on the mossy rock till the sinking or o'erclouded moon forbade me to continue my employment. I was indebted for books to a friendly person in the neighbourhood, whose compliance with my solicitations was prompted partly by benevolence, and partly by enmity to my father, whom he could not more egregiously offend than by gratifying my perverse and pernicious curiosity.

In leaving my chamber I was obliged to use the utmost caution to avoid rousing my brother, whose temper disposed him to thwart me in the least of my gratifications. My purpose was surely laudable, and yet on leaving the house and returning to it, I was obliged to use the vigilance and circumspection of a thief.

One night I left my bed with this view. I posted first to my vocal glen, and thence scrambling up a neighbouring steep which overlooked a wide extent of this roman-

tic country, gave myself up to contemplation, and the perusal of Milton's Comus.

My reflections were naturally suggested by the singularity of this echo. To hear my own voice speak at a distance would have been formerly regarded as prodigious. To hear, too, that voice, not uttered by another, by whom it might easily be mimicked, but by myself! I cannot now recollect the transition which led me to the notion of sounds, similar to these, but produced by other means than reverberation. Could I not so dispose my organs as to make my voice appear at a distance?

From speculation I proceeded to experiment. The idea of a distant voice like my own, was intimately present to my fancy. I exerted myself with a most ardent desire, and with something like a persuasion that I should succeed. I started with surprise, for it seemed as if success had crowned my attempts. I repeated the effort, but failed. A certain

position of the organs took place on the first attempt, altogether new, unexampled, and as it were by accident, for I could not attain it on the second experiment.

You will not wonder that I exerted myself with indefatigable zeal to regain what had once, though for so short a space, been in my power. Your own ears have witnessed the success of these efforts. By perpetual exertion I gained it a second time, and now was a diligent observer of the circumstances attending it. Gradually I subjected these finer and more subtle motions to the command of my will. What was at first difficult, by exercise and habit, was rendered easy. I learned to accommodate my voice to all the varieties of distance and direction.

It cannot be denied that this faculty is wonderful and rare, but when we consider the possible modifications of muscular motion, how few of these are usually exerted, how imperfectly they are subjected

to the will, and yet that the will is capable of being rendered unlimited and absolute, will not our wonder cease?

We have seen men who could hide their tongues so perfectly, that even an anatomist, after the most accurate inspection that a living subject could admit, has affirmed the organ to be wanting, but this was effected by the exertion of muscles unknown and incredible to the greater part of mankind.

The concurrence of teeth, palate, and tongue, in the formation of speech should seem to be indispensable, and yet men have spoken distinctly though wanting a tongue, and to whom, therefore, teeth and palate were superfluous. The tribe of motions requisite to this end are wholly latent and unknown to those who possess that organ.

I mean not to be more explicit. I have no reason to suppose a peculiar conformation or activity in my own organs, or that the power which I possess may not,

with suitable directions and by steady efforts, be obtained by others, but I will do nothing to facilitate the acquisition. It is by far too liable to perversion for a good man to desire to possess it, or to teach it to another.

There remained but one thing to render this instrument as powerful in my hands as it was capable of being. From my childhood, I was remarkably skilful at imitation. There were few voices whether of men or birds or beasts which I could not imitate with success. To add my ancient to my newly acquired skill, to talk from a distance, and at the same time in the accents of another, was the object of my endeavours; and this object, after a certain number of trials, I finally obtained.

In my present situation every thing that denoted intellectual exertion was a crime, and exposed me to invectives if not to stripes. This circumstance induced me to be silent to all others on the

subject of my discovery. But, added to this, was a confused belief that it might be made in some way instrumental to my relief from the hardships and restraints of my present condition. For some time I was not aware of the mode in which it might be rendered subservient to this end.

My father's sister was an ancient lady, resident in Philadelphia, the relict of a merchant, whose decease left her the enjoyment of a frugal competence. She was without children, and had often expressed her desire that her nephew Frank, whom she always considered as a sprightly and promising lad, should be put under her care. She offered to be at the expence of my education, and to bequeath to me at her death her slender patrimony.

This arrangement was obstinately rejected by my father, because it was merely fostering and giving scope to propensities which he considered as hurtful; and because his avarice desired that this

inheritance should fall to no ~~one~~ but himself. To ~~me~~, it was a scheme of ravishing felicity, and to be debarred from it was a source of anguish known to few. I had too much experience of my father's pertinacity ever to hope for a change in his views; yet the bliss of living with my aunt, in a new and busy scene, and in the unbounded indulgence of my literary passion, continually occupied my thoughts; for a long time these thoughts were productive only of despondency and tears.

Time only enhanced the desirableness of this scheme; my new faculty would naturally connect itself with these wishes, and the question could not fail to occur whether it might not 'aid me in the execution of my favourite plan.

A thousand superstitious tales were current in the family. Apparitions had been seen, and voices had been heard on a multitude of occasions. My father was a confident believer in supernatural

tokens. **The** voice of his wife, who had been many years dead, had been twice heard at midnight whispering at his pillow. I frequently asked myself whether a scheme favourable to my views might not be built upon these foundations. Suppose (thought I) my mother should be made to enjoin upon him compliance with my wishes ?

This idea bred in me a temporary consternation. To imitate the voice of the dead, to counterfeit a commission from heaven, bore the aspect of presumption and impiety. It seemed an offence which could not fail to draw after it the vengeance of the Deity. My wishes for a time yielded to my fears, but this scheme, in proportion as I meditated on it, became more plausible ; no other occurred to me so easy and so efficacious. I endeavoured to persuade myself that the end proposed was in the highest degree praiseworthy, and that the excellence of

my purpose would justify the means employed to attain it.

My resolutions were, for a time, attended with *fluctuations and misgivings*. These gradually disappeared, and my purpose became firm ; I was next to devise the means of effecting my views ; this did not demand any tedious deliberation. It was easy to gain access to my father's chamber without notice or detection : cautious footsteps, and the suppression of breath, would place me, unsuspected and unthought of, by his bed side. The words I should use, and the mode of utterance were not easily settled ; but having at length fixed on these, I made myself, by much previous repetition, perfectly familiar with the use of them.

I selected a blustering and inclement night, in which the darkness was augmented by a veil of the blackest clouds. The building we inhabited was slight in its structure, and full of crevices through which the gale found easy way, and

whistled in a thousand cadences. On this night the elemental music was remarkably sonorous, and was mingled not unfrequently with thunder heard remote.

I could not divest myself of secret dread. My heart faltered with a consciousness of wrong. Heaven seemed to be present and to disapprove my work ; I listened to the thunder and the winds, as to the stern voice of this disapprobation. Big drops stood on my forehead, and my tremors almost incapacitated me from proceeding.

These impediments, however, I surmounted. I crept up stairs at midnight, and entered my father's chamber. The darkness was intense, and I sought with outstretched hands for his bed. The darkness, added to the trepidation of my thoughts, disabled me from making a right estimate of distances. I was conscious of this, and when I advanced within the room, paused.

I endeavoured to compare the progress

I had made with my knowledge of the room, and governed by the result of this comparison, proceeded cautiously and with my hands still outstretched in search of the foot of the bed. At this moment lightning flashed into the room: the brightness of the gleam was dazzling, yet it afforded me an exact knowledge of my situation. I had mistaken my way, and discovered that my knees nearly touched the bedstead, and that my hands at the next step, would have touched my father's cheek. His closed eyes and every line in his countenance, were painted, as it were, for an instant on my sight.

The flash was accompanied with a burst of thunder, whose vehemence was stunning. I always entertained a dread of thunder, and now recoiled, overborne with terror. Never had I witnessed so luminous a gleam and so tremendous a shock, yet my father's slumber appeared not to be disturbed by it.

I stood irresolute and trembling: to

scene and the purpose that I had meditated, yet a belief of this connexion, though wavering and obscure, lurked in my mind ; something more than a coincidence merely casual, appeared to have subsisted between my situation, at my father's bed side, and the flash that darted through the window, and diverted me from my design. It palsied my courage, and strengthened my conviction, that my scheme was criminal.

After some time had elapsed, and tranquillity was, in some degree, restored in the family, my father reverted to the circumstances in which I had been discovered on the first alarm of this event. The truth was impossible to be told. I felt the utmost reluctance to be guilty of a falshood, but by falshood only could I elude detection. That my guilt was the offspring of a fatal necessity, that the injustice of others gave it birth and made it unavoidable, afforded me slight consolation. Nothing can be more injurious

than a lie, but its evil tendency chiefly respects our future conduct. Its direct consequences may be transient and few, but it facilitates a repetition, strengthens temptation, and grows into habit. I pretended some circumstance had drawn me from my bed, and that discovering the condition of the barn, I hastened to inform my father.

Some time after this, my father summoned me to his presence. I had been previously guilty of disobedience to his commands, in a matter about which he was usually very scrupulous. My brother had been privy to my offence, and had threatened to be my accuser. On this occasion I expected nothing but arraignment and punishment. Weary of oppression, and hopeless of any change in my father's temper and views, I had formed the resolution of eloping from his house, and of trusting, young as I was, to the caprice of fortune. Whilst I was hesitating whether to abscond without

the knowledge of the family, or to make my resolutions known to them, I received this summons.

I was employed at this time in the field; night was approaching, and I had made no preparation for departure. All the preparation in my power to make, was indeed small; a few clothes, made into a bundle, was the sum of my possessions. Time would have little influence in improving my prospects, and I resolved to execute my scheme immediately.

I left my work; intending to seek my chamber, and taking what was my own, to disappear for ever. I turned a style that led out of the field into a bye path, when my father appeared before me, advancing in an opposite direction; to avoid him was impossible, and I summoned my fortitude to a conflict with his passion.

As soon as we met, instead of anger

and upbraiding, he told me that he had been reflecting on my aunt's proposal, to take me under her protection, and had concluded that the plan was proper; if I still retained my wishes on that head, he would readily comply with them; and that if I chose, I might set off for the city next morning, as a neighbour's waggon was preparing to go.

I shall not dwell on the rapture with which this proposal was listened to: it was with difficulty that I persuaded myself that he was in earnest in making it, nor could I divine the reasons for so sudden and unexpected a change in his intentions. These I afterwards discovered. Some one had instilled into him fears, that my aunt, exasperated at his opposition to her request respecting the unfortunate Frank, would bequeath her property to strangers. To obviate this evil, which his avarice prompted him to regard as much greater than any mis-

chief that would accrue to me from the change of my abode, he embraced her proposal.

I entered with exultation and triumph on this new scene ; my hopes were by no means disappointed. Detested labour was exchanged for luxurious idleness. I was master of my time, and chose my own occupations. My kinswoman, on discovering that I entertained no relish for the drudgery of colleges, and was contented with the means of intellectual gratification, which I could obtain under her roof, allowed me to pursue my own choice.

CHAPTER II.

THREE tranquil years passed away, during which, each day added to my happiness, by adding to my knowledge. My eloquial faculty was not neglected. I improved it by an assiduous exercise; I deeply reflected on the uses to which it might be applied. I was not destitute of pure intentions; I delighted not in evil; I was incapable of knowingly contributing to another's misery: but the sole or principal end of my endeavours was not the happiness of others.

I was actuated by ambition. I was delighted to possess superior power; I was prone to manifest that superiority, and was satisfied if this were done, without much solicitude concerning conse-

quences. I sported frequently with the apprehensions of my associates ; often threw out a bait for their wonder, and supplied them with occasions for the structure of theories. It may not be amiss to enumerate one or two adventures in which I was engaged.

I had taken much pains to improve the sagacity of a favourite spaniel. It was my purpose, indeed, to ascertain to what degree of improvement the principles of reasoning and imitation could be carried in a dog. There is no doubt that the animal affixes distinct ideas to sounds. What are the possible limits of his vocabulary no one can tell. In conversing with my dog I did not use English words, but selected simple monosyllables. Habit likewise enabled him to comprehend my gestures. If I crossed my hands on my breast, he understood the signal and lay down behind me. If I joined my hands and lifted them to my breast, he returned home. If I grasped

one arm above the elbow, he ran before me. *If I lifted my hand to my forehead,* he trotted composedly behind. By one motion I could make him bark ; by another, I could reduce him to silence. He would howl in twenty different strains of mournfulness at my bidding. He would fetch and carry with undeviating faithfulness.

His actions being thus chiefly regulated by gestures that to a stranger would appear indifferent or casual, it was easy to produce a belief that the animal's knowledge was much greater, than, in truth, it was.

•One day in a mixed company, the discourse turned upon the unrivalled abilities of Damon. Damon had, indeed, acquired, in all the circles which I frequented, an extraordinary reputation. Numerous instances of his sagacity were quoted, and some of them exhibited on the spot. Much surprise was excited by the readiness with which he appeared

to comprehend sentences of considerable *abstraction and complexity*, though he, in reality, attended to nothing but the movements of hand or fingers with which I accompanied my words. I enhanced the astonishment of some, and excited the ridicule of others, by observing, that my dog not only understood English when spoken by others, but actually spoke the language himself, with no small degree of precision.

This assertion could not be admitted without proof; proof, therefore, was readily produced. At a known signal, Damon began a low, interrupted noise, in which the astonished hearers clearly distinguished English words. A dialogue began between the animal and his master, which was maintained, on the part of the former, with great vivacity and spirit. In this dialogue, the dog asserted the dignity of his species and capacity of intellectual improvement. Then the company separated, lost in wonder,

but perfectly convinced by the evidence that had been produced.

On a subsequent occasion a select company was assembled at a garden, at a small distance from the city. Discourse glided through a variety of topics, till it alighted at length on the subject of invisible beings. From the speculations of philosophers we proceeded to the creations of the poet. Some maintained the justness of Shakspeare's delineations of aerial beings, while others denied it. By no violent transition, Ariel and his songs were introduced, and a lady, celebrated for her musical skill, was solicited to accompany her pedal harp with the song of "Five fathom deep thy father lies" — She was known to have set, for her favourite instrument, all the songs of Shakspeare.

My youth made me little more than an auditor on this occasion. I sat apart from the rest of the company, and carefully noted every thing. The track which

the conversation had taken, suggested a scheme which was not thoroughly digested when the lady began her enchanting strain.

She ended, and the audience were mute with rapture. The pause continued, when a strain was wafted to our ears, from another quarter. The spot where we sat was embowered by a vine. The verdant arch was lofty, and the area beneath was spacious.

The sound proceeded from above. At first it was faint and scarcely audible; presently it reached a louder key, and every eye was cast up in expectation of beholding a face among the pendant clusters. The strain was easily recognised, for it was no other than that which Ariel is made to sing when finally absolved from the service of the wizard.

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In the cowslips bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry;
On the bat's back I do fly;
After summer, merrily: &c.

Their hearts palpitated as they listened : they gazed at each other for a solution of the mystery. At length the strain died away at a distance, and an interval of silence was succeeded by an earnest discussion of the cause of this prodigy. One supposition only could be adopted, which was, that the strain was not uttered by human organs. That the songster was stationed on the roof of the arbour, and having finished his melody had risen into the viewless fields of air.

I had been invited to spend a week at this house : this period was nearly expired when I received information that my aunt was suddenly taken sick, and that her life was in imminent danger. I immediately set out on my return to the city, but before my arrival she was dead.

This lady was entitled to my gratitude and esteem ; I had received the most essential benefits at her hand. I was not destitute of sensibility, and was deeply affected by this event. I will own, how-

ever, that my grief was lessened by reflecting on the consequences of her death with regard to my own condition. I had been ever taught to consider myself as her heir, and her death, therefore, would free me from certain restraints.

My aunt had a female servant who had lived with her for twenty years : she was married, but her husband, who was an artisan, lived apart from her. I had no reason to suspect the woman's sincerity and disinterestedness ; but my aunt was no sooner consigned to the grave than a will was produced, in which Dorothy was named her sole and universal heir.

It was in vain to urge my expectations and my claims ; the instrument was legibly and legally drawn up. Dorothy was exasperated by my opposition and surmises, and vigorously enforced her title. In a week after the decease of my kinswoman, I was obliged to seek a new dwelling. As all my property consisted in

my clothes and my papers, this was easily done.

My condition was now calamitous and forlorn. Confiding in the acquisition of my aunt's patrimony, I had made no other provision for the future. I hated manual labour, or any task of which the object was gain. To be guided in my choice of occupations by any motive but the pleasure which the occupation was qualified to produce, was intolerable to my proud, indolent, and restive temper.

This resource was now cut off; the means of immediate subsistence were denied me. If I had determined to acquire the knowledge of some lucrative art, the acquisition would demand time, and, meanwhile, I was absolutely destitute of support. My father's house was, indeed, open to me, but I preferred to stifle myself with the filth of the kennel rather than return to it.

Some plan it was immediately neces-

sary to adopt. The exigence of my affairs, and this reverse of fortune, continually occupied my thoughts; I estranged myself from society and from books, and devoted myself to lonely walks and mournful meditation.

One morning, as I ranged along the bank of Schuylkill, I encountered a person, by name Ludloe, of whom I had some previous knowledge. He was from Ireland; was a man of some rank, and apparently rich. I had met with him before, but in mixed companies, where little direct intercourse had taken place between us. Our last meeting was in the harbour where Ariel was so unexpectedly introduced.

Our acquaintance merely justified a transient salutation; he did not, however, content himself with noticing me as I passed, but joined me in my walk, and entered into conversation. It was easy to advert to the occasion on which we had last met, and to the mysterious incident

which then occurred. I was solicitous to dive into his thoughts upon this head, *and put some questions which tended to the point that I wished.*

I was somewhat startled when he expressed his belief that the performer of this mystic strain was one of the company then present, who exerted, for this end, a faculty not commonly possessed. Who this person was he did not venture to guess, and I could not discover, by the tokens which he suffered to appear, that his suspicions glanced at me. He expatiated with great profoundness and fertility of ideas on the uses to which a faculty like this might be employed. No more powerful engine, he said, could be conceived, by which the ignorant and credulous might be moulded to our purposes. Managed by a man of ordinary talents, it would open for him the straightest and surest avenues to wealth and power.

His remarks excited in my mind a new

train of thoughts. I had not hitherto considered the subject in this light ; *though vague ideas of the importance of this art could not fail to be occasionally suggested.* I ventured to inquire into his ideas of the mode in which an art like this could be employed, so as to effect the purposes he mentioned.

He dealt chiefly in general representations. Men, he said, believed in the existence and energy of invisible powers, and in the duty of discovering and conforming to their will. This will was supposed to be sometimes made known to them through the medium of their senses. A voice coming from a quarter where no attendant form could be seen, would, in most cases, be ascribed to supernal agency, and a command imposed on them in this manner would be obeyed with religious scrupulousness. Thus men might be imperiously directed in the disposal of their industry, their property, and even of their lives. Men,

actuated by a mistaken sense of duty, might, under this influence, be led to the *commission of the most flagitious, as well as the most heroic acts*. If it were his desire to accumulate wealth, or institute a new sect, he should need no other instrument.

I listened to this kind of discourse with great avidity, and regretted when he thought proper to introduce new topics. He ended by requesting me to visit him, which I eagerly consented to do. When left alone, my imagination was filled with the images suggested by this conversation. The hopelessness of better fortune, which I had lately harboured, now gave place to cheering confidence. Those motives which should have deterred me from this species of imposture, had never been vivid or stable, and were still more weakened by the artifices of which I had already been guilty. The utility or harmlessness of the end, justified in my eyes the means.

No event had been more unexpected by me, than the bequest of my aunt to her servant. The will, under which the latter claimed, was dated prior to my coming to the city. I was not surprised, therefore, that it had once been made, but merely that it had never been cancelled or superseded by a later instrument. My wishes inclined me to suspect the existence of a later will, but I had conceived that, to ascertain its existence, was beyond my power.

Now, however, a different opinion began to be entertained. This woman, like those of her sex and class, was unlettered and superstitious. Her faith in spells and apparitions was of the most lively kind. Could not her conscience be awakened by a voice from the grave? In her lonely midnight hours, my aunt might be introduced, upbraiding her for her injustice, and commanding her to atone for it by acknowledging the claim of the rightful proprietor.

True it was, that no subsequent will might exist, but *this was the fruit of mistake, or of negligence.* She probably intended to cancel the old one, but this act might, by her own weakness, or by the artifices of her servant, be delayed till death had put it out of her power. In either case, a mandate from the dead could scarcely fail of being obeyed.

I considered this woman as the usurper of my property. Her husband, like herself, was laborious and covetous; their good fortune had made no change in their mode of living; but they were as frugal and as eager to accumulate as ever. In their hands money was inert and sterile, or it served to foster their vices. To take it from them would, therefore, be a benefit both to them and to myself; not even an imaginary injury would be inflicted. Restitution, on legal compulsion would be reluctant and painful; but if enjoined by Heaven would be voluntary: and the performance of a

seeming duty would carry with it its own reward.

These reasonings, aided by inclination, were sufficient to determine me. I have no doubt but their fallacy would have been detected in the sequel, and my scheme productive of nothing but confusion and remorse. From these consequences, however, my fate interposed, as in the former instance, to save me.

Having formed my resolution, many preliminaries to its execution were necessary to be settled. These demanded deliberation and delay. Meanwhile I recollected my promise to Ludloe, and paid him a visit. I met a frank and affectionate reception. It would not be easy to paint the delight which I experienced in this man's society. I was at first oppressed with the sense of my own inferiority in age, knowledge, and rank. Hence arose numberless reserves and incapacitating diffidences ; but these were speedily dissipated by the fascinations of

CARWIN, THE BILOQUIST.

this man's address. His superiority was only rendered by time more conspicuous; but this superiority, by appearing never to be present to his own mind, ceased to be uneasy to me. My questions required to be frequently answered, and my mistakes to be rectified; but my keenest scrutiny could detect in his manner neither arrogance nor contempt. He seemed to talk merely from the overflow of his ideas, or a benevolent desire of imparting information.

My visits gradually became more frequent. Meanwhile my wants increased, and the necessity of some change in my condition became daily more urgent. This incited my reflections on the scheme which I had formed. The time and place suitable to my design, were not selected without much anxious inquiry, and frequent waverings of purpose. These being at length fixed, the interval to elapse before the carrying of my design into effect was not without perturbation and suspense.

These could not be concealed from my new friend, and at length prompted him to inquire into the cause.

It was not possible to communicate the whole truth ; but the warmth of his manner inspired me with some degree of ingenuousness. I did not hide from him my former hopes and my present destitute condition. He listened to my tale with no expressions of sympathy ; and when I had finished, abruptly inquired, whether I had any objection to a voyage to Europe ? I answered in the negative. He then said that he was preparing to depart in a fortnight, and advised me to make up my mind to accompany him.

This unexpected proposal gave me pleasure and surprise, but the want of money occurred to me as an insuperable objection. On this being mentioned, "O ! ho !" said he carelessly, "that objection is easily removed. I will bear all expenses of your passage myself."

The extraordinary beneficence of this

act, as well as the air of incautiousness attending it, made me doubt the sincerity of his offer, and when new declarations removed this doubt, I could not forbear expressing at once my sense of his generosity and of my own unworthiness.

He replied, that generosity had been expunged from his catalogue, as having no meaning, or a vicious one. It was the scope of his exertions to be just. This was the sum of human duty, and he that ran beside, outstripped, or fell short of justice, was a criminal. What he gave me was my due or not my due. If it were my due, I might reasonably demand it from him, and it was wicked to withhold it. Merit on one side or gratitude on the other, were contradictory and unintelligible.

If I were fully convinced that this benefit was not my due and yet received it, he should hold me in contempt. The rectitude of my principles and conduct would be the measure of his approbation ;

and no benefit should he ever bestow which the receiver was not intitled to claim, and which it would not be criminal in him to refuse.

These principles were not new from the mouth of Ludloe, but they had, hitherto, been regarded as the fruits of a venturous speculation in my mind. I had never traced them into their practical consequences, and if his conduct on this occasion had not squared with his maxims, I should not have imputed to him inconsistency. I did not ponder on these reasonings at this time: objects of immediate importance engrossed my thoughts.

One obstacle to this measure was removed. When my voyage was performed how should I subsist in my new abode? I concealed not my perplexity, and he commented on it in his usual manner. How did I mean to subsist, he asked, in my own country? The means of living

would be, at least, as much within my reach there as here. As to the pressure of immediate and absolute want, he believed I should be exposed to little hazard. With talents such as mine, I must be hunted by a destiny peculiarly malignant, if I could not provide myself with necessities wherever my lot were cast.

He would make allowances, however, for my diffidence and self-distrust, and would obviate my fears by expressing his own intentions with regard to me. I must be apprised, however, of his true meaning. He laboured to shun all hurtful and vicious things, and therefore carefully abstained from making or confiding in promises. It was just to assist me in this voyage, and it would probably be equally just to continue to me similar assistance when it was finished. That indeed was a subject, in a great degree, within my own cognizance. His aid would be proportioned to my wants and

to my merits, and I had only to take care that my claims were just, for them to be admitted.

This scheme could not but appear to me eligible. I thirsted after an acquaintance with new scenes ; my present situation could not be changed for a worse ; I trusted to the constancy of Ludloe's friendship ; to this at least it was better to trust than to the success of my imposture on Dorothy, which was adopted merely as a desperate expedient : finally I determined to embark with him.

In the course of this voyage my mind was busily employed. There were no other passengers besides ourselves, so that my own condition and the character of Ludloe continually presented themselves to my reflections. It will be supposed that I was not a vague or indifferent observer.

There were no vicissitudes in the deportment, or lapses in the discourse of my friend. His feelings appeared to

preserve an unchangeable tenor, and his thoughts and words always to flow with the same rapidity. His slumber was profound, and his wakeful hours serene. He was regular and temperate in all his exercises and gratifications. Hence were derived his clear perceptions and exuberant health.

This treatment of me, like all his other mental and corporeal operations, was modelled by one inflexible standard. Certain scruples and delicacies were incident to my situation. Of the existence of these he seemed to be unconscious, and yet nothing escaped him inconsistent with a state of absolute equality.

I was naturally inquisitive as to his fortune and the collateral circumstances of his condition. My notions of politeness hindered me from making direct inquiries. By indirect means I could gather nothing but that his state was opulent and independent, and that he had two sisters whose situation resembled his own.

Though, in conversation, he appeared to be governed by the utmost candour ; no light was let in upon the former transactions of his life. The purpose of his visit to America I could merely guess to be the gratification of curiosity.

My future pursuits must be supposed chiefly to occupy my attention. On this head I was destitute of all stedfast views. Without profession or habits of industry, or sources of permanent revenue, the world appeared to me an ocean on which my bark was set afloat, without compass or sail. The world into which I was about to enter was untried and unknown, and though I could consent to profit by the guidance, I was unwilling to rely on the support of others.

This topic, being nearest my heart, I frequently introduced into conversation with my friend ; but on this subject he always allowed himself to be led by me, while on all others, he was zealous to point the way. To every scheme that I

proposed he was sure to urge objections. All the liberal professions were censured as perverting the understanding, by giving scope to the sordid motives of gain, or imbuing the mind with erroneous principles. Skill was slowly obtained, and success, though integrity and independence must be given for it, dubious and unstable. The mechanical trades were equally obnoxious ; they were vicious by contributing to the spurious gratifications of the rich and multiplying the objects of luxury ; they were destructive to the intellect and vigour of the artizan ; they enervated his frame and brutalised his mind.

When I pointed out to him the necessity of some species of labour, he tacitly admitted that necessity, but refused to direct me in the choice of a pursuit, which though not free from defect should yet have the fewest inconveniences. He dwelt on the fewness of our actual wants, the temptations which attend the posses-

sion of wealth, the benefits of seclusion and privacy, and the duty of unfettering our minds from the prejudices which govern the world.

His discourse tended merely to unsettle my views and increase my perplexity. This effect was so uniform that I at length desisted from all allusions to this theme, and endeavoured to divert my own reflections from it. When our voyage should be finished, and I should actually tread this new stage, I believed that I should be better qualified to judge of the measures to be taken by me.

CHAPTER III.

AT length we reached Belfast. From thence we immediately repaired to Dublin. I was admitted as a member of his family. When I expressed my uncertainty as to the place to which it would be proper for me to repair, he gave me a blunt but cordial invitation to his house. My circumstances allowed me no option, and I readily complied. My attention was for a time engrossed by a diversified succession of new objects. Their novelty, however, disappearing, left me at liberty to turn my eyes upon myself and my companion, and here my reflections were supplied with abundant food.

His house was spacious and commodious, and furnished with profusion and elegance. A suite of apartments was assigned to me, in which I was permitted to reign uncontrouled, and access was permitted to a well furnished library. My food was furnished in my own room, prepared in the manner which I had previously directed. Occasionally Ludloe would request my company to breakfast, when an hour was usually consumed in earnest or sprightly conversation. At all other times he was invisible; and his apartments, being wholly separate from mine, I had no opportunity of discovering in what way his hours were employed.

He defended this mode of living as being most compatible with liberty. He delighted to expatiate on the evils of cohabitation. Men, subjected to the same regimen, compelled to eat and sleep and associate at certain hours, were strangers to all rational independ-

ence and liberty. Society would never be exempt from servitude and misery, till those artificial ties which held human beings together under the same roof were dissolved. He endeavoured to regulate his own conduct in pursuance of these principles, and to secure to himself as much freedom as the present regulations of society would permit. The same independence which he claimed for himself he likewise extended to me. The distribution of my own time, the selection of my own occupations and companions, should belong to myself.

But these privileges, though while listening to his arguments I could not deny them to be valuable, I would have willingly dispensed with. The solitude in which I lived became daily more painful. I ate and drank, enjoyed clothing and shelter, without the exercise of forethought or industry. I walked and sat, went out and returned for as long,

and at what seasons I thought proper, yet my condition was a fertile source of discontent.

I felt myself removed to a comfortless and chilly distance from Ludloe. I wanted to share in his occupations and views. With all his ingenuousness of aspect and overflow of thought, when he allowed me his company, I felt myself painfully bewildered with regard to his genuine condition and sentiments.

He had it in his power to introduce me to society ; and without an introduction, it was scarcely possible to gain access to any social circle or domestic fireside. Add to this, my own obscure prospects and dubious situation. Some regular intellectual pursuit would render my state less irksome, but I had hitherto adopted no scheme of this kind.

Time tended, in no degree, to alleviate my dissatisfaction. It increased till the determination became at length formed of opening my thoughts to Ludloe. At

the next breakfast interview which took place, I introduced the subject, and expatiated, without reserve, on the state of my feelings. I concluded with entreating him to point out some path in which my talents might be rendered useful to himself or to mankind.

After a pause of some minutes, he said, "What would you do? You forget the immaturity of your age. If you are qualified to act a part in the theatre of life, step forth; but you are not qualified. You want knowledge, and with this you ought previously to endow yourself. Means for this end are within your reach. Why should you waste your time in idleness, and torment yourself with unprofitable wishes? books are at hand; books from which most sciences and languages can be learned. Read, analyse, digest; collect facts, and investigate theories: ascertain the dictates of reason, and supply yourself with the inclination and the power to adhere to

them. You will not, legally speaking, be a man in less than three years. Let this period be devoted to the acquisition of wisdom. Either stay here, or retire to a house I have on the banks of Killarney, where you will find all the conveniences of study."

I could not but reflect with wonder at this man's treatment of me. I could plead none of the rights of relationship; yet I enjoyed the privileges of a son. He had not imparted to me any scheme, by pursuit of which I might finally compensate him for the expense to which my maintenance and education would subject him. He gave me reason to hope for the continuance of his bounty. He talked and acted as if my fortune were totally disjoined from his; yet was I indebted to him for the morsel which sustained my life. Now it was proposed to withdraw myself to studious leisure, and romantic solitude. All my wants, personal and intellectual, were to be

supplied gratuitously and copiously. No means were prescribed by which I might make compensation for all these benefits. In conferring them he seemed to be actuated by no view to his own ultimate advantage. He took no measures to secure my future services.

I suffered these thoughts to escape me on this occasion, and observed, that to make my application successful or useful, it was necessary to pursue some end. I must look forward to some post which I might hereafter occupy beneficially to myself or others ; and for which all the efforts of my mind should be bent to qualify myself.

These hints gave him visible pleasure ; and now, for the first time, he deigned to advise me on this head. His scheme, however, was not suddenly produced. The way to it was circuitous and long. It was his business to make every new step appear to be suggested by my own reflections. His own ideas were the

seeming result of the moment, and sprang out of the last idea that was uttered. Being hastily taken up, they were of course, liable to objection. These objections, sometimes occurring to me and sometimes to him, were admitted or contested with the utmost candour. One scheme went through numerous modifications before it was proved to be ineligible, or before it yielded place to a better. It was easy to perceive, that books alone were insufficient to impart knowledge : that men must be examined with our own eyes to make us acquainted with their nature ; that ideas, collected from observation and reading, must correct and illustrate each other ; that the value of all principles, and their truth, lie in their practical effects. Hence gradually arose the usefulness of travelling, of inspecting the habits and manners of a nation, and investigating on the spot the causes of its happiness and misery. Finally, it was determined that Spain was more suit-

able than any other to the views of a judicious traveller.

My language, habits, and religion, were mentioned as obstacles to close and extensive views; but these difficulties successively and slowly vanished. Converse with books and natives of Spain, a stedfast purpose and unwearied diligence, would efface all differences between me and a Castilian with respect to speech. Personal habits were changeable by the same means. The bars to unbounded intercourse, arising from the religion of Spain being irreconcilably opposite to mine, cost us no little trouble to surmount, and here the skill of Ludloe was eminently displayed.

I had been accustomed to regard as unquestionable the fallacy of the Romish faith. This persuasion was habitual and the child of prejudice, and was easily shaken by the artifices of this logician. I was first led to bestow a kind of assent to the doctrines of the Romish church;

but my convictions were easily subdued by a new species of argumentation, and in a short time I reverted to my ancient disbelief; so that, if an exterior conformity to the rites of Spain were requisite to the attainment of my purpose, that conformity must be dissembled.

My moral principles had hitherto been vague and unsettled. My circumstances had led me to the frequent practice of insincerity; but my transgressions, as they were slight and transient, did not much excite my previous reflections or subsequent remorse. My deviations, however, though rendered easy by habit, were by no means sanctioned by my principles. Now an imposture more profound and deliberate was projected; and I could not hope to perform well my part, unless steadfastly and thoroughly persuaded of its rectitude.

My friend was the eulogist of sincerity. He delighted to trace its influence on the happiness of mankind; and proved that

nothing but the universal practice of this virtue was necessary to the perfection of human society. His doctrine was splendid and beautiful. To detect its imperfections was no easy task; to lay the foundations of virtue in utility, and to limit, by that scale, the operation of general principles; to see that the value of sincerity, like that of every other mode of action, consisted in its tendency to good, and that, therefore, the obligation to speak truth was not paramount or intrinsical; that my duty is modelled on a knowledge and foresight of the conduct of others; and that, since men in their actual state are infirm and deceitful, a just estimate of consequences may sometimes make dissimulation my duty, were truths that did not speedily occur. The discovery, when made, appeared to be a joint work. I saw nothing in Ludloe but proofs of candour, and a judgment incapable of bias.

The means which this man employed

to fit me for his purpose, perhaps owed their success to my youth and ignorance. I may have given you exaggerated ideas of his dexterity and address. Of that I am unable to judge. Certain it is, that no time or reflection has abated my astonishment at the profoundness of his schemes, and the perseverance with which they were pursued by him. To detail their progress would expose me to the risk of being tedious, yet none but minute details would sufficiently display his patience and subtlety.

It will suffice to relate, that after a sufficient period of preparation, and arrangements being made for maintaining a copious intercourse with Ludloe, I embarked for Barcelona. A restless curiosity and vigorous application have distinguished my character in every scene. Here was a spacious field for the exercise of all my energies. I sought out a preceptor in my new religion. I entered into the hearts of priests and

confessors,—the *hidalgo* and the peasant, the monk and the prelate, the austere and voluptuous devotee, were scrutinised in all their forms.

Man was the chief subject of my study, and the social sphere that in which I principally moved; but I was not inattentive to inanimate nature, nor unmindful of the past. If the scope of virtue be to maintain the body in health, and to furnish its highest enjoyments to every sense, to increase the number, and accuracy, and order of our intellectual stores, no virtue was ever more unblemished than mine. If to act upon our conceptions of right, and to acquit ourselves of all prejudice and selfishness in the formation of our principles, entitle us to the testimony of a good conscience, I might justly claim it.

I shall not pretend to ascertain my rank in the moral scale. If a system of deceit, pursued merely from the love of truth; if voluptuousness, never gratified

at the expense of health, may incur censure, I am censureable. This, indeed, was not the limit of my deviations. Deception was often unnecessarily practised, and my biloquial faculty did not lie unemployed.

To recount my mystical exploits would be an endless task. They were designed as mere specimens of power, to illustrate the influence of superstition : to give sceptics the consolation of certainty : to annihilate the scruples of a tender female, or facilitate my access to the bosoms of courtiers and monks.

My first achievement of this kind took place in the convent of the Escorial. For some time the hospitality of this brotherhood allowed me a cell in that magnificent and gloomy fabric. I was drawn hither chiefly by the treasures of Arabian literature, which are preserved here in the keeping of a learned Maronite, from Lebanon. Standing one evening on the steps of the great altar,

this devout friar expatiated on the miraculous evidences of his religion ; and, in a moment of enthusiasm, appealed to San Lorenzo, whose martyrdom was displayed before us. No sooner was the appeal made, than the saint, obsequious to the summons, whispered his responses from the shrine, and commanded the heretic to tremble and believe. This event was reported to the convent. With whatever reluctance, I could not refuse my testimony to its truth, and its influence on my faith was clearly shewn in my subsequent conduct.

A lady of rank, in Seville, who had been guilty of many unauthorized indulgences, was at last awakened to remorse by a voice from Heaven, which she imagined had commanded her to expiate her sins by an abstinence from all food for thirty days. Her friends found it impossible to outroot this persuasion, or to overcome her resolution even by force. I chanced to be one in a numerous company where

she was present. This fatal illusion was mentioned, and an opportunity afforded to the lady of defending her scheme. At a pause in the discourse, a voice was heard from the ceiling, which confirmed the truth of her tale; but, at the same time, revoked the command, and, in consideration of her faith, pronounced her absolution. Satisfied with this proof, the auditors dismissed their unbelief, and the lady consented to eat.

In the course of a copious correspondence with Ludloe, the observations I had collected were given. A sentiment, which I can hardly describe, induced me to be silent on all adventures connected with my bivocal projects. On other topics, I wrote fully and without restraint. I painted, in vivid hues, the scenes with which I was daily conversant, and pursued fearlessly every speculation on religion and government that occurred. This spirit was encouraged by Ludloe, who failed not to comment on

my narrative, and multiply deductions from my principles.

He taught me to ascribe the evils that infest society to the errors of opinion. The absurd and unequal distribution of power and property gave birth to poverty and riches, and these were the sources of luxury and crimes. These positions were readily admitted; but the remedy for these ills, the means of rectifying these errors, were not easily discovered. We have been inclined to impute them to inherent defects in the moral constitution of men: that oppression and tyranny grow up by a sort of natural necessity, and that they will perish only when the human species is extinct. Ludloe laboured to prove that this was by no means the case: that man is the creature of circumstances: that he is capable of endless improvement: that his progress has been stopped by the artificial impediment of government: that by the removal of this the fondest dreams of imagination will be realised.

From detailing and accounting for the evils which exist under our present institutions, he usually proceeded to delineate some scheme of Utopian felicity, where the empire of reason should supplant that of force; where justice should be universally understood and practised; where the interest of the whole and of each individual should be seen by all to be the same; where the public good should be the scope of all activity; where the tasks of all should be the same, and the means of subsistence equally distributed.

No one could contemplate his pictures without rapture. By their comprehensiveness and amplitude they filled the imagination. I was unwilling to believe that in no region of the world, or at no period could these ideas be realised. It was plain that the nations of Europe were tending to greater depravity, and would be the prey of perpetual vicissitude. All individual attempts at their reformation

would be fruitless. He therefore who desired the diffusion of right principles, to make a just system be adopted by a whole community, must pursue some extraordinary method.

In this state of mind I recollected my native country, where a few colonists from Britain had sown the germ of populous and mighty empires. Attended as they were into their new abode by all their prejudices, yet such had been the influence of new circumstances, of consulting for their own happiness, of adopting simple forms of government, and excluding nobles and kings from their system, that they enjoyed a degree of happiness far superior to their parent state.

To conquer the prejudices and change the habits of millions is impossible. The human mind, exposed to social influences, inflexibly adheres to the direction that is given to it; but, for the same reason why men who begin in error, will continue, those, who commence in truth,

may be expected to persist. Habit and example will operate with equal force in both instances.

Let a few, sufficiently enlightened and disinterested, take up their abode in some unvisited region. Let their social scheme be founded in equity, and how small soever their original number may be, their growth into a nation is inevitable. Among other effects of national justice, was to be ranked the swift increase of numbers. Exempt from servile obligations and perverse habits, endowed with property, wisdom, and health, hundreds will expand with inconceivable rapidity into thousands, and thousands into millions; and a new race, tutored in truth, may, in a few centuries, overflow the habitable world.

Such were the visions of youth! I could not banish them from my mind. I knew them to be crude; but believed that deliberation would bestow upon them solidity

and shape. Meanwhile, I imparted them to Ludloe.

In answer to the reveries and speculations which I sent to him respecting this subject, Ludloe informed me, that they had led his mind into a new sphere of meditation. He had long and deeply considered in what way he might essentially promote my happiness. He had entertained a faint hope that I should one day be qualified for a station like that to which he himself had been advanced. This post required an elevation and stability of views which human beings seldom reach, and which could be attained by me only by a long series of heroic labours. Hitherto every new stage in my intellectual progress had added vigour to his hopes, and he cherished a stronger belief than formerly that my career would terminate auspiciously. This, however, was necessarily distant. Many preliminaries must first be settled ; many arduous accomplishments be first obtained ; and

my virtue be subjected to severe trials. At present it was not in his power to be more explicit; but if my reflections suggested no better plan, he advised me to settle my affairs in Spain, and return to him immediately. My knowledge of this country would be of the highest use, on the supposition of my ultimately arriving at the honours to which he had alluded; and some of these preparatory measures could be taken only with his assistance, and in his company.

This intimation was eagerly obeyed, and in a short time I arrived at Dublin. Meanwhile my mind had copious occupation in commenting on my friend's letter. This scheme, whatever it was, seemed to be suggested by my mention of a plan of colonisation, and my preference of that mode of producing extensive and permanent effects on the condition of mankind. It was easy therefore to conjecture that this mode had been pursued

under some mysterious modifications and conditions.

It had always excited my wonder that so obvious an expedient had been overlooked. The globe which we inhabit was very imperfectly known. The regions and nations unexplored, there was reason to believe, surpassed in extent, and perhaps in populousness, those with which we are familiar. The order of Jesuits had furnished an example of all the errors and excellences of such a scheme. Their plan was founded on erroneous notions of religion and policy, and they had absurdly chosen a scene * within reach of the injustice and ambition of an European tyrant.

It was wise and easy to profit by their example. Resting on the two props of fidelity and zeal, an association might exist for ages in the heart of Europe, whose influence might be felt, and might

be boundless, in some region of the southern hemisphere; and by whom a moral and political structure might be raised, the growth of pure wisdom, and totally unlike those fragments of Roman and Gothic barbarism which cover the face of what are called the civilised nations. The belief now rose in my mind that some such scheme had actually been prosecuted, and that Ludloe was a coadjutor. On this supposition, the caution with which he approached to his point, the arduous probation which a candidate for a part on this stage must undergo, and the rigours of that test by which his fortitude and virtue must be tried, were easily explained. I was too deeply imbued with veneration for the effects of such schemes, and too sanguine in my confidence in the rectitude of Ludloe, to refuse my concurrence in any scheme by which my qualifications might at length be raised to a due point.

Our interview was frank and affection-

ate. I found him situated just as formerly. His aspect, manners, and deportment were the same. I entered once more on my former mode of life, but our intercourse became more frequent. We constantly breakfasted together, and our conversation was usually prolonged through half the morning.

For a time our topics were general. I thought proper to leave to him the introduction of more interesting themes; this, however, he betrayed no inclination to do. His reserve excited some surprise, and I began to suspect that whatever design he had formed with regard to me had been laid aside. To ascertain this question, I ventured, at length, to recal his attention to the subject of his last letter, and to inquire whether subsequent reflection had made any change in his views.

He said that his views were too momentous to be hastily taken up, or hastily dismissed; the station, my attain

ment of which depended wholly on myself, was high above vulgar heads, and was to be gained only by years of solicitude and labour. This, at least, was true with regard to minds ordinarily constituted. I, perhaps, deserved to be regarded as an exception, and might be able to accomplish in a few months that for which others were obliged to toil during half their lives.

“Man,” continued he, “is the slave of habit. Convince him to-day that his duty leads straight forward,—he shall advance, but at every step his belief shall fade; habit will resume its empire, and to-morrow he shall turn back, or betake himself to oblique paths.

“We know not our strength till it be tried. Virtue, till confirmed by habit, is a dream. You are a man imbued with errors, and vincible by slight temptations. Deep inquiries must bestow light on your opinions, and the habit of encountering and vanquishing temptation

must inspire you with fortitude. Till this be done you are unqualified for that post, in which you will be invested with divine attributes, and prescribe the condition of a large portion of mankind.

“ Confide not in the firmness of your principles, or the steadfastness of your integrity. Be always vigilant and fearful. Never think you have enough of knowledge, and let not your caution slumber for a moment, for you know not when danger is near.”

I acknowledged the justice of his admonitions, and professed myself willing to undergo any ordeal which reason should prescribe. What, I asked, were the conditions, on the fulfilment of which depended my advancement to the station he alluded to? was it necessary to conceal from me the nature and obligations of this rank?

These inquiries sunk him more profoundly into meditation than I had ever before witnessed. After a pause, in which

some perplexity was visible, he answered :

“ I scarcely know what to say. As to promises, I claim them not from you. We are now arrived at a point in which it is necessary to look around with caution, and that consequences should be fully known. A number of persons are leagued together for an end of some moment. To make yourself one of these is submitted to your choice. Among the conditions of their alliance are mutual fidelity and secrecy.

“ Their existence depends upon this : their existence is known only to themselves. This secrecy must be obtained by all the means which are possible. When I have said thus much, I have informed you, in some degree, of their existence, but you are still ignorant of the purpose contemplated by this association, and of all the members, except myself. So far, no dangerous disclosure is yet made : but this degree of concealment is not suffi-

must inspire you with fortitude. Till this be done you are unqualified for that post, in which you will be invested with divine attributes, and prescribe the condition of a large portion of mankind.

“ Confide not in the firmness of your principles, or the steadfastness of your integrity. Be always vigilant and fearful. Never think you have enough of knowledge, and let not your caution slumber for a moment, for you know not when danger is near.”

I acknowledged the justice of his admonitions, and professed myself willing to undergo any ordeal which reason should prescribe. What, I asked, were the conditions, on the fulfilment of which depended my advancement to the station he alluded to? was it necessary to conceal from me the nature and obligations of this rank?

These inquiries sunk him more profoundly into meditation than I had ever before witnessed. After a pause, in which

some perplexity was visible, he answered :

“ I scarcely know what to say. As to promises, I claim them not from you. We are now arrived at a point in which it is necessary to look around with caution, and that consequences should be fully known. A number of persons are leagued together for an end of some moment. To make yourself one of these is submitted to your choice. Among the conditions of their alliance are mutual fidelity and secrecy.

“ Their existence depends upon this : their existence is known only to themselves. This secrecy must be obtained by all the means which are possible. When I have said thus much, I have informed you, in some degree, of their existence, but you are still ignorant of the purpose contemplated by this association, and of all the members, except myself. So far, no dangerous disclosure is yet made : but this degree of concealment is not suffi-

cient. Thus much is made known to you, because it is unavoidable. The individuals who compose this fraternity are not immortal, and the vacancies occasioned by death must be supplied from among the living. The candidates must be instructed and prepared, and they are always at liberty to recede. Their reason must approve the obligations and duties of their station, or they are unfit for it. If they recede, one duty is still incumbent upon them : they must observe an inviolable silence. To this they are not held by any promise. They must weigh consequences, and freely decide ; but they must not fail to number among these consequences their own death.

“ Their death will not be prompted by vengeance. The executioner will say, he that has once revealed the tale is likely to reveal it a second time ; and, to prevent this, the betrayer must die. Nor is this the only consequence. To prevent the further revelation, he to whom the secret

was imparted must likewise perish. He must not console himself with the belief that his trespass will be unknown. The knowledge cannot, by human means, be withheld from this fraternity. Rare, indeed, will it be that his purpose to disclose is not discovered before it can be effected, and the disclosure prevented by his death.

“ Be well aware of your condition. What I now, or may hereafter mention, mention not again. Admit not even a doubt as to the propriety of hiding it from all the world. There are eyes which will discern this doubt amidst the closest folds of your heart, and your life will instantly be sacrificed.

“ At present be the subject dismissed. Reflect deeply on the duty which you have already incurred. Think upon your strength of mind, and be careful not to lay yourself under impracticable obligations. It will always be in your power to recede. Even after you are

solemnly enrolled a member, you may consult the distates of your own understanding, and relinquish your post ; but while you live, the obligation to be silent will perpetually attend you.

“ We seek not the misery or death of any one, but we are swayed by an immutable calculation. Death is to be abhorred, but the life of the betrayer is productive of more evil than his death : his death, therefore, we choose, and our means are instantaneous and unerring.

“ I love you. The first impulse of my love is to dissuade you from seeking to know more. Your mind will be full of ideas ; your hands will be perpetually busy to a purpose into which no human creature, beyond the verge of your brotherhood, must pry. Believe me, who have made the experiment, that compared with this task, the task of inviolable secrecy, all others are easy. To be dumb will not suffice ; never to know any remission in your zeal or your

watchfulness will not suffice. If the sagacity of others detect your occupations, however strenuously you may labour for concealment, your doom is ratified, as well as that of the wretch whose evil destiny led him to pursue you.

“ Yet if your fidelity fail not, great will be your recompence. For all your toils and self-devotion, ample will be the retribution. Hitherto you have been wrapt in darkness and storm ; then will you be exalted to a pure and unruffled element. It is only for a time that temptation will environ you, and your path will be toilsome. In a few years you will be permitted to withdraw to a land of sages, and the remainder of your life will glide away in the enjoyments of beneficence and wisdom.

“ Think deeply on what I have said. Investigate your own motives and opinions, and prepare to submit them to the

test of numerous hazards and experiments."

Here my friend passed to a new topic. I was desirous of reverting to this subject, and obtaining farther information concerning it, but he assiduously repelled all my attempts, and insisted on my bestowing deep and impartial attention on what had already been disclosed. I was not slow to comply with his directions. My mind refused to admit any other theme of contemplation than this.

As yet I had no glimpse of the nature of this fraternity. I was permitted to form conjectures; and previous incidents bestowed but one form upon my thoughts. In reviewing the sentiments and deportment of Ludloc, my belief continually acquired new strength. I even recollected hints and ambiguous allusions in his discourse, which were easily solved, on the supposition of the existence of a new model of society, in some unsuspected corner of the world.

I did not fully perceive the necessity of secrecy ; but this necessity perhaps would be rendered apparent, when I should come to know the connection that subsisted between Europe and this imaginary colony. But what was to be done ? I was willing to abide by these conditions. My understanding might not approve of all the ends proposed by this fraternity, and I had liberty to withdraw from it, or to refuse to ally myself with them. That the obligation of secrecy should still remain, was unquestionably reasonable.

CHAPTER. IV.

It appeared to be the plan of Ludloe rather to damp than to stimulate my zeal. He discouraged all attempts to renew the subject in conversation. He dwelt upon the arduousness of the office to which I aspired, the temptations to violate my duty with which I should be continually beset, the inevitable death with which the slightest breach of my engagements would be followed, and the long apprenticeship which it would be necessary for me to serve, before I should be fitted to enter into this conclave.

Sometimes my courage was depressed by these representations. My zeal, however, was sure to revive; and at length

Ludloe declared himself willing to assist me in the accomplishment of my wishes. For this end, it was necessary, he said, that I should be informed of a second obligation, which every candidate must assume. Before any one could be deemed qualified, he must be thoroughly known to his associates. For this end, he must determine to disclose every fact in his history, and every secret of his heart. I must begin with making these confessions, with regard to my past life, to Ludloe, and must continue to communicate, at stated seasons, every new thought, and every new occurrence, to him. This confidence was to be absolutely limitless: no exceptions were to be admitted, and no reserves were to be practised; and the same penalty attended the infraction of this rule as of the former. Means would be employed, by which the slightest deviation, in either case, would be detected, and the deathful consequence would follow with instant and inevitable

expedition. If secrecy were difficult to practise, sincerity, in that degree in which it was here demanded, was a task infinitely more arduous, and a period of new deliberation was necessary before I should decide. I was at liberty to pause : nay, the longer was the period of deliberation which I took, the better ; but, when I had once entered the path, it was not in my power to recede. After having solemnly avowed my resolution to be thus sincere in my confession, any particle of reserve or duplicity would cost me my life.

This indeed was a subject to be deeply thought upon. Hitherto I had been guilty of concealment with regard to my friend. I had entered into no formal compact, but had been conscious of a kind of tacit obligation to hide no important transaction of my life from him. This consciousness was the source of continual anxiety. I had exerted, on numerous occasions, my bivocal faculty, but, in my

intercourse with Ludloe, had suffered not the slightest intimation to escape me with regard to it. This reserve was not easily explained. It was, in a great degree, the product of habit; but I likewise considered that the efficacy of this instrument depended upon its existence being unknown. To confide the secret to one was to put an end to my privilege: how widely the knowledge would thereafter be diffused, I had no power to foresee.

Each day multiplied the impediments to confidence. Shame hindered me from acknowledging my past reserves. Ludloe, from the nature of our intercourse, would certainly account my reserve, in this respect, unjustifiable, and to excite his indignation or contempt was an unpleasant undertaking. Now, if I should resolve to persist in my new path, this reserve must be dismissed: I must make him master of a secret which was precious to me beyond all others; by acquainting

him with past concealments, I must risk incurring his suspicion and his anger. These reflections were productive of considerable embarrassment.

There was, indeed, an avenue by which to escape these difficulties, if it did not, at the same time, plunge me into greater. My confessions might in other respects be unbounded, but my nerves, in this particular, might be continued. Yet should I not expose myself to considerable perils? Would my secret be forever unsuspected and undiscovered?

When I considered the nature of this faculty, the impossibility of going farther than suspicion, since the agent could be known only by his confession, and even this confession would not be believed by the greater part of mankind, I was tempted to conceal it.

In most cases, if I had asserted the possession of this power, I should be treated as a liar; it would be considered as an absurd and audacious expedient to

free myself from the suspicion of having entered into compact with a dæmon, or of being myself an emissary of the grand foe. Here, however, there was no reason to dread a similar imputation, since Ludloe had denied the preternatural pretensions of these ~~noisy~~ sounds.

My conduct on this occasion was no wise influenced by the belief of any inherent sanctity in truth. Ludloe had taught me to model myself in this respect entirely with a view to immediate consequences. If my genuine interest, on the whole, was promoted by veracity, it was proper to adhere to it; but, if the result of my investigation were opposite, truth was to be sacrificed without scruple.

Meanwhile, in a point of so much moment, I was not hasty to determine. My delay seemed to be, by no means, unacceptable to Ludloe, who applauded my discretion, and warned me to be circumspect. My attention was chiefly

absorbed by considerations connected with this subject, and little regard was paid to any foreign occupation or amusement.

One evening, after a day spent in my closet, I sought recreation by walking forth. My mind was chiefly occupied by the review of incidents which happened in Spain. I turned my face towards the fields, and recovered not from my reverie till I had proceeded some miles on the road to Meath. The night had considerably advanced, and the darkness was rendered intense, by the setting of the moon. Being somewhat weary, as well as undetermined in what manner next to proceed, I seated myself on a grassy bank beside the road. The spot which I had chosen was aloof from passengers, and shrouded in the deepest obscurity.

Some time elapsed, when my attention was excited by the slow approach of an equipage. I presently discovered a

coach and six horses, but unattended, except by coachman and postillion, and with no light to guide them on their way. Scarcely had they passed the spot where I rested, when some one leaped from beneath the hedge, and seized the head of the fore-horses. Another called upon the coachman to stop, and threatened him with instant death if he disobeyed. A third drew open the coach door, and ordered those within to deliver their purses. A shriek of terror showed me that a lady was within, who eagerly consented to preserve her life by the loss of her money.

To walk unarmed in the neighbourhood of Dublin, especially at night, has always been accounted dangerous. I had about me the usual instruments of defence. I was desirous of rescuing this person from the danger which surrounded her, but was somewhat at a loss how to effect my purpose. My single strength was insufficient to contend with three ruffians.

After a moment's debate an expedient was suggested, which I hastened to execute.

Time had not been allowed for the ruffian who stood beside the carriage to receive the plunder, when several voices, loud, clamorous, and eager, were heard in the quarter whence the traveller had come. By trampling with quickness, it was easy to imitate the sound of many feet. The robbers were alarmed, and one called upon another to attend. The sounds increased, and, at the next moment, they betook themselves to flight, but not till a pistol was discharged. Whether it was aimed at the lady in the carriage, or at the coachman, I was not permitted to discover, for the report affrighted the horses, and they set off at full speed.

I could not hope to overtake them : I knew not whither the robbers had fled, and whether, by proceeding, I might not fall into their hands. These considera-

tions induced me to resume my feet, and retire from the scene as expeditiously as possible. I regained my own habitation without injury.

I have said that I occupied separate apartments from those of Ludloe. To these there were means of access without disturbing the family. I hastened to my chamber, but was considerably surprised to find, on entering my apartment, Ludloe seated at a table, with a lamp before him.

My momentary confusion was greater than his. On discovering who it was, he assumed his accustomed looks, and explained appearances, by saying, that he wished to converse with me on a subject of importance, and had therefore sought me at this secret hour, in my own chamber. Contrary to his expectation, I was absent. Conceiving it possible that I might shortly return, he had waited till now. He took no further notice of my absence, nor manifested any

desire to know the cause of it, but proceeded to mention the subject which had brought him hither. These were his words :

“ You have nothing which the laws permit you to call your own. Justice entitles you to the supply of your physical wants from those who are able to supply them ; but there are few who will acknowledge your claim, or spare an atom of their superfluity to appease your cravings. That which they will not spontaneously give, it is not right to wrest from them by violence. What, then, is to be done ? Property is necessary to your own subsistence. It is useful, by enabling you to supply the wants of others. To give food, and clothing, and shelter, is to give life, to annihilate temptation, to unshackle virtue, and propagate felicity. How shall property be gained ?

“ You may set your understanding or your hands to work. You may weave stockings or write poems, and exchange

them for money ; but these are tardy and meagre schemes. The means are disproportioned to the end, and I will not suffer you to pursue them. My justice will supply your wants.

“ But dependence on the justice of others is a precarious condition. To be the object is a less ennobling state than to be bestower of benefit. Doubtless you desire to be vested with competence and riches, and to hold them by virtue of the law, and not by the will of a benefactor.”

He paused, as if waiting for my assent to his positions. I readily expressed my concurrence, and my desire to pursue any means compatible with honesty. He resumed :

“ There are various means besides labour, violence, or fraud. It is right to select the easiest within your reach. It happens that the easiest is at hand. A revenue of some thousands a year, a stately mansion in the city, and another

in Kildare, old and faithful domestics, and magnificent furniture, are good things. Will you have them?"

"A gift like that," replied I, "will be attended by momentous conditions. I cannot decide upon its value, until I know these conditions."

"The sole condition is your consent to receive them. Not even the airy obligation of gratitude will be created by acceptance. On the contrary, by accepting them, you will confer the highest benefit upon another."

"I do not comprehend you. Something surely must be given in return."

"Nothing. It may seem strange that, in accepting the absolute controul of so much property, you subject yourself to no conditions; that no claims of gratitude or service will accrue; but the wonder is greater still. The law equitably enough fetters the gift with no restraints, with respect to you that receive it; but not so with regard to the unhappy being

who bestows it. That being must part not only with property but liberty. In accepting the property, you must consent to enjoy the services of the present possessor. They cannot be disjoined.

“Of the true nature and extent of the gift you should be fully apprised. Be aware, therefore, that, together with this property, you will receive absolute power over the liberty and person of the being who now possesses it. That being must become your ‘domestic slave ; be governed, in every particular, by your caprice.

“Happily for you, though fully invested with this power, the degree and mode in which it will be exercised will depend upon yourself. You may either totally forbear the exercise, or employ it only for the benefit of your slave. However injurious, therefore, this authority may be to the subject of it, it will, in some sense, only enhance the value of the gift to you.

“The attachment and obedience of this being will be chiefly evident in one thing. Its duty will consist in conforming, in every instance, to your will. All the powers of this being are to be devoted to your happiness ; but there is one relation between you which enables you to confer, while exacting, pleasure. This relation is sexual. Your slave is a woman ; and the bond which transfers her property and person to you is — marriage.”

My knowledge of Ludloe, his principles, and reasonings, ought to have precluded that surprise which I experienced at the conclusion of his discourse. I knew that he regarded the present institution of marriage as a contract of servitude, and the terms of it unequal and unjust. When my surprise had subsided, my thoughts turned upon the nature of his scheme. After a pause of reflection, I answered :

“ Both law and custom have connected

obligations with marriage, which, though heaviest on the female, are not light upon the male. Their weight and extent are not immutable and uniform; they are modified by various incidents, and especially by the mental and personal qualities of the lady.

“ I am not sure that I should willingly accept the property and person of a woman decrepit with age, and enslaved by perverse habits and evil passions: whereas youth, beauty, and tenderness would be worth accepting, even for their own sake, and disconnected with fortune.

“ As to altar vows, I believe they will not make me swerve from equity. I shall exact neither service nor affection from my spouse. The value of these, and, indeed, not only the value, but the very existence, of the latter depends upon its spontaneity. A promise to love tends rather to loosen than strengthen the tie.

“ As to myself, the age of illusion is past. I shall not wed, till I find one

whose moral and physical constitution will make personal fidelity easy. I shall judge without mistiness or passion, and habit will come in aid of an enlightened and deliberate choice.

“I shall not be fastidious in my choice. I do not expect, and scarcely desire, much intellectual similitude between me and my wife. Our opinions and pursuits cannot be in common. While women are formed by their education, and their education continues in its present state, tender hearts and misguided understandings are all that we can hope to meet with.

“What are the character, age, and person of the woman to whom you allude? and what prospect of success would attend my exertions to obtain her favour?”

“I have told you she is rich. She is a widow, and owes her riches to the liberality of her husband, who was a trader of great opulence, and who died while on a mercantile adventure to Spain. He

was not unknown to you. Your letters from Spain often spoke of him. In short, she is the widow of Benington, whom you met at Barcelona. She is still in the prime of life; is not without many feminine attractions; has an ardent and credulous temper; and is particularly given to devotion. This temper it would be easy to regulate according to your pleasure and your interest, and I now submit to you the expediency of an alliance with her.

“I am a kinsman, and regarded by her with uncommon deference; and my commendations, therefore, will be of great service to you, and shall be given.

“I will deal ingenuously with you. It is proper you should be fully acquainted with the grounds of this proposal. The benefits of rank, and property, and independence, which I have already mentioned as likely to accrue to you from this marriage, are solid and valuable benefits; but these are not the sole ad-

vantages, and to benefit you, in these respects, is not my whole view.

“ No. My treatment of you henceforth will be regulated by one principle. I regard you only as one undergoing a probation or apprenticeship; as subjected to trials of your sincerity and fortitude. The marriage I now propose to you is desirable, because it will make you independent of me. Your poverty might create an unsuitable bias in favour of proposals, one of whose effects would be to set you beyond fortune’s reach. That bias will cease, when you cease to be poor and dependent.

“ Love is the strongest of all human delusions. That fortitude which is not subdued by the tenderness and blandishments of woman, may be trusted; but no fortitude, which has not undergone that test, will be trusted by us.

“ This woman is a charming enthusiast. She will never marry but him whom she passionately loves. Her power over the

heart that loves her will scarcely have limits. The means of prying into your transactions, of suspecting and sifting your thoughts, which her constant society with you, while sleeping and waking, her zeal and watchfulness for your welfare, and her curiosity, adroitness, and penetration will afford her, are evident. Your danger, therefore, will be imminent. Your fortitude will be obliged to have recourse, not to flight, but to vigilance. Your eye must never close.

“Alas ! what human magnanimity can stand this test ? How can I persuade myself that you will not fail ? I waver between hope and fear. Many, it is true, have fallen, and dragged with them the author of their ruin, but some have soared above even these perils and temptations, with their fiery energies unimpaired : and great has been, as great ought to be, their recompense.

“But you are doubtless aware of your danger. I need not repeat the conse-

quences of betraying your trust, the rigour of those who will judge your fault, the unerring and unbounded scrutiny to which your actions, the most secret and indifferent, will be subjected.

“Your conduct, however, will be voluntary. At your own option be it, to see or not to see this woman. Circumspection, deliberation, forethought, are your sacred duties and highest interest.”

Ludloe's remarks on the seductive and bewitching powers of women, on the difficulty of keeping a secret which they wish to know, and to gain which they employ the soft artillery of tears and prayers, and blandishments and menaces, are familiar to all men; but they had little weight with me, because they were unsupported by my own experience. I had never had any intellectual or sentimental connection with the sex. My meditations and pursuits had all led a different way; and a bias had gradually been given to my feelings, very unfavour-

able to the refinements of love. I acknowledge, with shame and regret, that I was accustomed to regard the physical and sensual consequences of the sexual relation as realities; and every thing intellectual, disinterested, and heroic, which enthusiasts connect with it, as idle dreams. Besides, said I, I am yet a stranger to the secret, on the preservation of which so much stress is laid, and it will be optional with me to receive it or not. If, in the progress of my acquaintance with Mrs. Benington, I should perceive any extraordinary danger in the gift, cannot I refuse, or at least delay to comply with any new conditions from Ludloc? Will not his candour and his affection for me rather commend than disapprove my diffidence? In fine, I resolved to see this lady.

She was, it seems, the widow of Benington, whom I knew in Spain. This man was an English merchant settled at Barcelona, to whom I had been com-

mended by Ludloe's letters, and through whom my pecuniary supplies were furnished. Much intercourse and some degree of intimacy had taken place between us, and I had gained a pretty accurate knowledge of his character. I had been informed, through different channels, that his wife was much his superior in rank; that she possessed great wealth in her own right; and that some disagreement of temper or views occasioned their separation. She had married him for love, and still doated on him: the occasion for separation having arisen, it seems, not on her side but on his. As his habits of reflection were nowise friendly to religion, and as hers, according to Ludloe, were of the opposite kind, it is possible that some jarring had arisen between them from this source. Indeed, from some casual and broken hints of Benington, especially in the latter part of his life, I had long since gathered this conjecture. Something,

thought I, may be derived from my acquaintance with her husband favourable to my views.

I anxiously waited for an opportunity of acquainting Ludloe with my resolution. On the day of our last conversation, he had made a short excursion from town, intending to return the same evening, but had continued absent for several days. As soon as he came back, I hastened to acquaint him with my wishes.

“Have you well considered this matter?” said he. “Be assured it is of no trivial import. The moment at which you enter the presence of this woman will decide your future destiny. Even putting out of view the subject of our late conversations, the light in which you shall appear to her will greatly influence your happiness, since, though you cannot fail to love her, it is quite uncertain what return she may think proper to make. Much, doubtless, will depend on your own perseverance and

address, but you will have many, perhaps insuperable obstacles to encounter on several accounts, and especially in her attachment to the memory of her late husband. As to her devout temper, this is nearly allied to a warm imagination in some other respects, and will operate much more in favour of an ardent and artful lover, than against him."

I still expressed my willingness to try my fortune with her.

"Well," said he, "I anticipated your consent to my proposal, and the visit I have just made was to her. I thought it best to pave the way, by informing her that I had met with one for whom she had desired me to look out. You must know that her father was one of those singular men who set a value upon things exactly in proportion to the difficulty of obtaining or comprehending them. His passion was for antiques, and his favourite pursuit during a long life was monuments in brass, marble, and parchment,

of the remotest antiquity. He was wholly indifferent to the character or conduct of our present sovereign and his ministers ; but was extremely solicitous about the name and exploits of a king of Ireland that lived two or three centuries before the flood. He felt no curiosity to know who was the father of his wife's child ; but would travel a thousand miles, and consume months, in investigating which son of Noah it was that first landed on the coast of Munster. He would give a hundred guineas from the mint for a piece of old decayed copper no bigger than his nail, provided it had awkward characters upon it, too much defaced to be read. The whole stock of a great bookseller was, in his eyes, a cheap exchange for a shred of parchment, containing half a homily written by Saint Patrick. He would have gratefully given all his patrimonial domains to one who should inform him what pendragon or

druid it was who set up the first stone on Salisbury plain.

“This spirit, as you may readily suppose, being seconded by great wealth and long life, contributed to form a very large collection of venerable lumber, which, though beyond all price to the collector himself, is of no value to his heiress but so far as it is marketable. She designs to bring the whole to auction, but for this purpose a catalogue and description are necessary. Her father trusted to a faithful memory, and to vague and scarcely legible memorandums, and has left a very arduous task to any one who shall be named to the office. It occurred to me, that the best means of promoting your views was to recommend you to this office.

“You are not entirely without the antiquarian frenzy yourself. The employment, therefore, will be somewhat agreeable to you for its own sake. It will en-

title you to become an inmate of the same house, and thus establish an incessant intercourse between you; and the nature of the business is such, that you may perform it in what time, and with what degree of diligence and accuracy you please."

I ventured to insinuate that, to a woman of rank and family, the character of a hireling was by no means a favourable recommendation.

He answered, that he proposed, by the account he should give of me, to obviate every scruple of that nature. Though my father was no better than a farmer, it is not absolutely certain but that my remoter ancestors had princely blood in their veins: but as long as proofs of my low extraction did not impertinently intrude themselves, my silence, or at most equivocal surmises, seasonably made use of, might secure me from all inconveniences on the score of birth. He should represent me, and I was such, as his

friend, favourite, and equal, and my passion for antiquities should be my principal inducement to undertake this office, though my poverty would make no objection to a reasonable pecuniary recompense.

Having expressed my acquiescence in his measures, he thus proceeded: "My visit was made to my kinswoman, for the purpose, as I just now told you, of paving your way into her family; but, on my arrival at her house, I found nothing but disorder and alarm. Mrs. Benington, it seems, on returning from a longer ride than customary, last Thursday evening, was attacked by robbers. Her attendants related an imperfect tale of somebody advancing at the critical moment to her rescue. It seems, however, they did more harm than good; for the horses took to flight and overturned the carriage, in consequence of which Mrs. Benington was severely bruised. She has kept her bed ever since, and a fever

was likely to ensue, which has only left her out of danger to day.”

As the adventure before related, in which I had so much concern, occurred at the time mentioned by Ludloe, and as all other circumstances were alike, I could not doubt that the person whom the exertion of my mysterious powers had relieved was Mrs. Benington : but what an ill-omened interference was mine ! The robbers would probably have been satisfied with the few guineas in her purse, and, on receiving these, would have left her to prosecute her journey in peace and security, but, by absurdly offering a succour, which could only operate upon the fears of her assailants, I endangered her life, first by the desperate discharge of a pistol, and next by the fright of the horses. My anxiety, which would have been less if I had not been, in some degree, myself, the author of the evil, was nearly removed by Ludloe's proceeding to assure me that all

danger was at an end, and that he left the lady in the road to perfect health. He had seized the earliest opportunity of acquainting her with the purpose of his visit, and had brought back with him her cheerful acceptance of my services. The next week was appointed for my introduction.

CHAPTER V.

WITH such an object in view, I had little leisure to attend to any indifferent object. My thoughts were continually bent upon the expected introduction; and my impatience and curiosity drew strength, not merely from the character of Mrs. Benington, but from the nature of my new employment. Ludloe had truly observed, that I was infected with somewhat of this antiquarian mania myself; and I now remembered that Benington had frequently alluded to this collection in possession of his wife. My curiosity had then been more than once excited by his representations, and I had formed a vague resolution of making myself acquainted with this lady and her

learned treasure, should I ever return to Ireland. Other incidents had driven this matter from my mind.

Meanwhile, affairs between Ludloe and myself remained stationary. Our conferences, which were regular and daily, related to general topics, and though his instructions were adapted to promote my improvement in the most useful branches of knowledge, they never afforded a glimpse towards that quarter where my curiosity was most active.

The next week now arrived, but Ludloe informed me that the state of Mrs. Benington's health required a short excursion into the country, and that he himself proposed to bear her company. The journey was to last about a fortnight, after which I might prepare myself for an introduction to her.

This was a very unexpected and disagreeable trial to my patience. The interval of solitude that now succeeded would have passed rapidly and pleasantly enough,

if an event so momentous had not been in suspense. Books, of which I was passionately fond, would have afforded me delightful and incessant occupation, and Ludloe, by way of reconciling me to unavoidable delays, had given me access to a little closet, in which his rarer and more valuable books were kept.

All my amusements, both by inclination and necessity, were centred in myself and at home. Ludloe appeared to have no visitants : and though frequently abroad, or at least secluded from me, had never proposed my introduction to any of his friends except Mrs. Benington. My obligations to him were already too great to allow me to lay claim to new favours and indulgences : nor, indeed, was my disposition such as to make society needful to my happiness. My character had been, in some degree, modelled by the faculty which I possessed. This deriving all its supposed value from impenetrable secrecy, and Ludloe's admonitions

tending powerfully to impress me with the necessity of wariness and circumspection in my general intercourse with mankind, I had gradually fallen into sedate, reserved, mysterious, and unsocial habits. My heart wanted not a friend.

In this temper of mind I set myself to examine the novelties which Ludloe's private book-cases contained.* It will be strange, thought I, if his favourite volumes do not show some marks of my friend's character. To know a man's favourite or most constant studies cannot fail of letting in some little light upon his secret thoughts: and though he would not have given me the reading of these books, if he had thought them capable of unveiling more of his concerns than he wished, yet possibly my ingenuity may go one step farther than he dreams of. You shall judge whether I was right in my conjectures.

The books which composed this little

library were chiefly the voyages and travels of the missionaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Added to these were some works upon political economy and legislation. Those writers who have amused themselves with reducing their ideas to practice, and drawing imaginary pictures of nations or republics, whose manners or government came up to their standard of excellence, were, all of whom I had ever heard, and some I had never heard of before, to be found in this collection. A translation of Aristotle's Republic, the political romances of Sir Thomas More, Harrington, and Hume, appeared to have been much read, and Ludloe had not been sparing of his marginal comments. In these writers he appeared to find nothing but error and absurdity; and his notes were introduced for no other end than to point out groundless principles and false conclusions. The style of these remarks was already familiar to me. I saw no-

thing new in them, or different from the strain of those speculations with which Ludloe was accustomed to indulge himself in conversation with me.

After having turned over the leaves of the printed volumes, I at length alighted on a small book of maps, from which, of course, I could reasonably expect no information on that point about which I was most curious. It was an Atlas, in which the maps had been drawn by the pen. None of them contained any thing remarkable, so far as I, who was indeed a smatterer in geography, was able to perceive, till I came to the end, when I noticed a map whose prototype I was wholly unacquainted with. It was drawn on a pretty large scale, representing two islands, which bore some faint resemblance, in their relative proportions at least, to Great Britain and Ireland. In shape they were widely different, but as to size there was no scale by which to measure them. From the great number of subdi-

visions, and from signs, which apparently represented towns and cities, I was allowed to infer, that the country was at least as extensive as the British isles. This map was apparently unfinished, for it had no names inscribed upon it.

I have just said, my geographical knowledge was imperfect. Though I had not enough to draw the outlines of any country by memory, I had still sufficient to recognise what I had before seen, and to discover that none of the larger lands in our globe resembled the one before me. Having such and so strong motives to curiosity, you may easily imagine my sensations on surveying this map. Suspecting, as I did, that many of Ludloe's intimations alluded to a country well known to him, though unknown to others, I was, of course, inclined to suppose that this country was now before me.

In search of some clue to this mystery, I carefully inspected the other maps in this collection. In a map of the eastern

hemisphere I soon observed the outlines of islands, which, though on a scale greatly diminished, were plainly similar to that of the land above described.

It is well known that the people of Europe are strangers to very nearly one half of the surface of the globe*. From the south pole up to the equator, it is only the small space occupied by Southern Africa and by South America with which we are acquainted. There is a vast extent, sufficient to receive a continent as large as North America, which our ignorance has filled only with water. In Ludloe's maps nothing was still to be seen, in these regions, but water, except in that spot where the transverse parallels of the southern tropic and the one hundred and fiftieth degree east longitude intersect each other. On this spot were

* The reader must be reminded that the incidents of this narrative are supposed to have taken place before the voyages of Bougainville and Cook.

Ludloe's islands placed, though without any name or inscription whatever.

I needed not to be told that this spot had never been explored by any European voyager who had published his adventures. What authority had Ludloe for fixing a habitable land in this spot? and why did he give us nothing but the courses of shores and rivers, and the scite of towns and villages, without a name?

As soon as Ludloe had set out upon his proposed journey of a fortnight, I unlocked his closet, and continued rummaging among these books and maps till night. By that time I had turned over every book and almost every leaf in this small collection, and did not open the closet again till near the end of that period. Meanwhile I made many reflections upon this remarkable circumstance. Could Ludloe have intended that I should see this Atlas? It was the only book that could be styled a manuscript on these

shelves, and it was placed beneath several others, in a situation far from being obvious and forward to the eye or the hand. Was it an oversight in him to leave it in my way, or could he have intended to lead ~~my~~ curiosity and knowledge a little farther onward by this accidental disclosure? In either case how was I to regulate my future deportment toward him? Was I to speak and act as if this Atlas had escaped my attention or not? I had already, after my first examination of it, placed the volume exactly where I found it. On every supposition I thought this was the safest way, and unlocked the closet a second time, to see that all was precisely in the original order. How was I dismayed and confounded on inspecting the shelves, to perceive that the Atlas was gone! This was a theft, which, from the closet being under lock and key, and the key always in my own pocket, and also from the very nature of the thing stolen,

could not be imputed to any of the domestics. After a few moments a suspicion occurred, which was soon changed into a certainty by applying to the housekeeper, who told me that Ludloe had returned, apparently in much haste, the evening of the day on which he had set out upon his journey, and just after I had left the house ; that he had gone into the room where this closet of books was, and, after a few minutes stay, come out again and went away. She told me also that he had made general inquiries after me, to which she had answered, that she had not seen me during the day, and supposed that I had spent the whole of it abroad. From this account it was plain, that Ludloe had returned for no other purpose but to remove this book out of my reach. But if he had a double key to this door, what should hinder his having access, by the same means to every other locked up place in the house ?

This suggestion made me start with terror. Of so obvious a means for possessing a knowledge of every thing under his roof, I had never been till this moment aware. Such is the infatuation which lays our most secret thoughts open to the world's scrutiny. We are frequently in most danger when we deem ourselves most safe, and our fortress is taken sometimes through a point, whose weakness, nothing, it should seem, but the blindest stupidity could overlook.

My terrors, indeed, quickly subsided when I came to recollect, that there was nothing in any closet or cabinet of mine which could possibly throw light upon subjects which I desired to keep in the dark. The more carefully I inspected my own drawers, and the more I reflected on the character of Ludloe, as I had known it, the less reason did there appear for my suspicions ; but I drew a lesson of caution from this circumstance, which contributed to my future safety.

From this incident I could not but infer Ludloe's unwillingness to let me so far into his geographical secret, as well as the certainty of that suspicion, which had very early been suggested to my thoughts, that Ludloe's plans of civilization had been carried into practice in some unvisited corner of the world. It was strange, however, that he should betray himself by such an inadvertency. One who talked so confidently of his own powers to unveil any secret of mine, and, at the same time, to conceal his own transactions, had surely committed an unpardonable error in leaving this important document in my way. My reverence, indeed, for Ludloe was such, that I sometimes entertained the notion that this seeming oversight was, in truth, a regular contrivance to supply me with a knowledge, of which, when I came maturely to reflect, it was impossible for me to make any ill use. There is no use in relating what would not be believed ;

and should I publish to the world the existence of islands in the space allotted by Ludloe's maps to these *terræ incognitæ*, what would the world answer? That whether the space described was sea or land was of no importance. That the moral and political condition of its inhabitants was the only topic worthy of rational curiosity. Since I had gained no information upon this point; since I had nothing to disclose but vain and fantastic surmises; I might as well be ignorant of every thing. Thus, from secretly condemning Ludloe's imprudence, I gradually passed to admiration of his policy. This discovery had no other effect than to stimulate my curiosity; to keep up my zeal to prosecute the journey I had commenced under his auspices.

I had hitherto formed a resolution to stop where I was, in Ludloe's confidence: to wait till the success should be ascertained of my projects with respect to Mrs. Benington, before I made any new

advance in the perilous and mysterious road into which he had led my steps. But, before this tedious fortnight had elapsed, I was grown extremely impatient for an interview, and had nearly resolved to undertake whatever obligation he should lay upon me.

This obligation was indeed a heavy one, since it included the confession of my biloquial powers. In itself the confession was little. To possess this faculty was neither laudable nor culpable, nor had it been exercised in a way which I should be very much ashamed to acknowledge. It had led me into many insincerities and artifices, which, though not justifiable by any creed, were intitled to some excuse, on the score of youthful ardour and temerity. The true difficulty in the way of these confessions was the not having made them already. Ludloe had long been intitled to this confidence, and though the existence of this power was venial or wholly innocent, the obsti-

nate concealment of it was a different matter, and would certainly expose me to suspicion and rebuke. But what was the alternative ; to conceal it : to incur those dreadful punishments awarded against treason in this particular. Ludloe's menaces still rung in my ears, and appalled my heart. How should I be able to shun them ? By concealing from every one what I concealed from him ? How was my concealment of such a faculty to be suspected or proved ? Unless I betray myself who could betray me ?

In this state of mind, I resolved to confess myself to Ludloe in the way that he required, reserving only the secret of this faculty. Awful, indeed, said I, is the crisis of my fate. If Ludloe's declarations are true, a horrid catastrophe awaits me. But as fast as my resolutions were shaken, they were confirmed anew by the recollection—who can betray me but myself ? If I deny, who is there can prove ? Suspicion can never light upon

the truth ; if it does, it can never be converted into certainty. Even my own lips cannot confirm it ; since who will believe my testimony ?

By such illusions was I fortified in my desperate resolution. Ludloe returned at the time appointed. He informed me that Mrs. Benington expected me next morning. She was ready to depart for her country residence, where she proposed to spend the ensuing summer, and would carry me along with her. In consequence of this arrangement, he said, many months would elapse before he should see me again. You will indeed," continued he, " be pretty much shut up from all society. Your books and your new friend will be your chief, if not only companions. Her life is not a social one, because she has formed extravagant notions of the importance of lonely worship and devout solitude. Much of her time will be spent in meditation upon pious books in her closet ; some of it in long

solitary rides in her coach, for the sake of exercise. Little will remain for eating and sleeping; so that unless you can prevail upon her to violate her ordinary rules for your sake, you will be left pretty much to yourself. You will have the more time to reflect upon what has hitherto been the theme of our conversations. You can come to town when you want to see me. I shall generally be found in these apartments."

In the present state of my mind, though impatient to see Mrs. Benington, I was still more impatient to remove the veil between Ludloe and myself. After some pause, I ventured to inquire if there was any impediment to my advancement in the road he had already pointed out to my curiosity and ambition.

He replied, with great solemnity, that I was already acquainted with the next step to be taken in this road. If I was prepared to make him my confessor, as

to the past, the present, and the future, without exception or condition, but what arose from defect of memory, he was willing to receive my confession.

I declared myself ready to do so.

“I need not,” he returned, “remind you of the consequences of concealment or deceit; I have already dwelt upon these consequences. As to the past, you have already told me, perhaps, all that is of any moment to know. It is in relation to the future that caution will be chiefly necessary. Hitherto your actions have been nearly indifferent to the ends of your future existence. Confessions of the past are required, because they are an earnest of the future character and conduct. Have you then—but this is too abrupt. Take an hour to reflect and deliberate. Go by yourself; take yourself to severe task, and make up your mind with a full, entire, and unfailing resolution; for the moment in which you assume this new obligation will make

you a new being. Perdition or felicity will hang upon that moment.

This conversation was late in the evening. After I had consented to postpone this subject, we parted, he telling me that he would leave his chamber door open, and as soon as my mind was made up I might come to him.

I retired accordingly to my apartment, and spent the prescribed hour in anxious and irresolute reflections. They were no other than had hitherto occurred, but they occurred with more force than ever. Some fatal obstinacy, however, got possession of me, and I persisted in the resolution of concealing one thing. We become fondly attached to objects and pursuits, frequently for no conceivable reason but the pain and trouble they cost us. In proportion to the danger in which they involve us do we cherish them. Our darling potion is the poison that scorches our vitals.

After some time, I went to Ludloc's

apartment. I found him solemn, and yet benign, at my entrance. After intimating my compliance with the terms prescribed, which I did, in spite of all my labour for composure, with accents half faltering, he proceeded to put various questions to me, relative to my early history.

I knew there was no other mode of accomplishing the end in view, but by putting all that was related in the form of answers to questions ; and when meditating on the character of Ludloe, I experienced excessive uneasiness as to the consummate art and penetration which his questions would manifest. Conscious of a purpose to conceal, my fancy invested my friend with the robe of a judicial inquisitor, all whose questions should aim at extracting the truth, and entrapping the liar.

In this respect, however, I was wholly disappointed. All his inquiries were general and obvious. They betokened cu-

riosity, but not suspicion; yet there were moments when I saw, or fancied I saw, some dissatisfaction betrayed in his features; and when I arrived at that period of my story which terminated with my departure, as his companion, for Europe, his pauses were, I thought, a little longer and more museful than I liked. At this period, our first conference ended. After a talk, which had commenced at a late hour, and had continued many hours, it was time to sleep, and it was agreed that next morning the conference should be renewed.

On retiring to my pillow, and reviewing all the circumstances of this interview, my mind was filled with apprehension and disquiet. I seemed to recollect a thousand things, which showed that Ludloe was not fully satisfied with my part in this interview. A strange and nameless mixture of wrath and pity appeared, on recollection, in his glances which, from time to time he cast upon

me. Some emotion played upon his features, in which, as my fears conceived, there was a tincture of resentment and ferocity. In vain I called my usual sophistries to my aid. In vain I pondered on the inscrutable nature of my peculiar faculty. In vain I endeavoured to persuade myself, that, by telling the truth, instead of entitling myself to Ludloe's approbation, I should only excite his anger, by what he could not but deem an attempt to impose upon his belief an incredible tale of impossible events. I had never heard or read of any instance of this faculty. I supposed the case to be absolutely singular, and that I should be no more entitled to credit in proclaiming it, than if I should maintain that a certain billet of wood possessed the faculty of articulate speech. It was now, however, too late to retract. I had been guilty of a solemn and deliberate concealment. I was now in the path in

which there was no turning back, and I must go forward.

The return of day's encouraging beams in some degree quieted my nocturnal terrors; and I went, at the appointed hour, to Ludloe's presence. I found him with a much more cheerful aspect than I expected, and began to chide myself in secret for the folly of my late apprehensions.

After a little pause, he reminded me, that he was only one among many, engaged in a great and arduous design. "As each of us," continued he, "is mortal, each of us must, in time, yield his post to another. Each of us is ambitious to provide himself a successor, to have his place filled by one selected and instructed by himself. All our personal feelings and affections are by no means intended to be swallowed up by a passion for the general interest; when they can be kept alive and be brought into

play, in subordination and subservience to the great end, they are cherished as useful, and revered as laudable; and whatever austerity and rigour you may impute to my character, there are few more susceptible of personal regards than I am.

“ You cannot know, till you are what I am, what deep, what all-absorbing interest I have in the success of my tutorship on this occasion. Most joyfully would I embrace a thousand deaths, rather than that you should prove a recreant. The consequences of any failure in your integrity will, it is true, be fatal to yourself; but there are some minds, of a generous texture, who are more impatient under ills they have inflicted upon others, than of those they have brought upon themselves; who had rather perish themselves, in infamy, than bring infamy or death upon a benefactor.

“ Perhaps of such noble materials is your mind composed. If I had not

thought so, you would never have been an object of my regard, and therefore, in the motives that shall impel you to fidelity, sincerity, and perseverance, some regard to my happiness and welfare will, no doubt, have place.

“And yet I exact nothing from you on this score. If your own safety be insufficient to controul you, you are not fit for us. There is, indeed, abundant need of all possible inducements to make you faithful. The task of concealing nothing from me must be easy. That of concealing every thing from others must be the only arduous one. The first you can hardly fail of performing, when the exigence requires it, for what motive can you possibly have to practise evasion or disguise with me? You have surely committed no crime; you have neither robbed, murdered, nor betrayed. If you have, there is no room for the fear of punishment or the terror of disgrace to step in, and make you hide your guilt

from me. You cannot dread any farther disclosure, because I can have no interest in your ruin or your shame: and what evil could ensue the confession of the foulest murder, even before a bench of magistrates, more dreadful than that which will inevitably follow the practice of the least concealment to me, or the least undue disclosure to others?"

You cannot easily conceive the emphatical solemnity with which this was spoken. Had he fixed piercing eyes on me while he spoke; had I perceived him watching my looks, and labouring to penetrate my secret thoughts, I should doubtless have been ruined: but he fixed his eyes upon the floor, and no gesture or look indicated the smallest suspicion of my conduct. After some pause, he continued, in a more pathetic tone, while his whole frame seemed to partake of his mental agitation:

"I am greatly at a loss by what means to impress you with a full conviction of

the truth of what I have just said. Endless are the sophistries by which we seduce ourselves into perilous and doubtful paths. What we do not see, we disbelieve, or we heed not. The sword may descend upon our infatuated head from above ; but we who are, meanwhile, busily inspecting the ground at our feet, or gazing at the scene around us, are not aware or apprehensive of its irresistible coming. In this case it must not be seen before it is felt, or before that time comes when the danger of incurring it is over. I cannot withdraw the veil, and disclose to your view the exterminating angel. All must be vacant and blank, and the danger that stands armed with death at your elbow must continue to be totally invisible, till that moment when its vengeance is provoked or unprovokable. I will do my part to encourage you in good, or intimidate you from evil. I am anxious to set before you all the motives which are fitted to influence

your conduct ; but how shall I work on your convictions ?”

Here another pause ensued, which I had not courage enough to interrupt. He presently resumed.

“ Perhaps you recollect a visit which you paid, on Christmas-day, in the year ——, to the cathedral church at Toledo. Do you remember ?”

A moment’s reflection recalled to my mind all the incidents of that day. I had good reason to remember them. I felt no small trepidation when Ludloe referred me to that day ; for, at the moment, I was doubtful whether there had not been some bivocal agency exerted on that occasion. Luckily, however, it was almost the only similar occasion in which it had been wholly silent.

I answered in the affirmative, “ I remember them perfectly.”

“ And yet,” said Ludloe, with a smile that seemed intended to disarm this declaration of some of its terrors, “ I sus-

pect your recollection is not as exact as mine, nor, indeed, your knowledge as extensive. You met there, for the first time, a female, whose nominal uncle, but real father, a dean of that ancient church, resided in a blue stone house, the third from the west angle of the square of St. Jago."

All this was exactly true.

"This female," continued he, "fell in love with you. Her passion made her deaf to all the dictates of modesty and duty, and she gave you sufficient intimations, in subsequent interviews at the same place, of this passion; which, she being fair and enticing, you were not slow in comprehending and returning. As not only the safety of your intercourse, but even of both your lives, depended on being shielded even from suspicion, the utmost wariness and caution was observed in all your proceedings. Tell me whether you succeeded in your efforts to this end."

I replied, that at the time I had no doubt but I had.

“ And yet,” said he, “ drawing something from his pocket, and putting it into my hand, “ there is the slip of paper, with the preconcerted emblem inscribed upon it, which the infatuated girl dropped in your sight, one evening, in the left aisle of that church. That paper you imagined you afterwards burnt in your chamber-lamp. In pursuance of this token, you deferred your intended visit, and next day the lady was accidentally drowned in passing a river. Here ended your connexion with her, and with her was buried, as you thought, all memory of this transaction.

“ I leave you to draw your own inference from this disclosure. Meditate upon it when alone. Recal all the incidents of that drama, and labour to conceive the means by which my sagacity has been able to reach events that took place so far off, and under so deep a co-

vering. If you cannot penetrate these means, learn to reverence my assertions, that I cannot be deceived; and let sincerity henceforth be the rule of your conduct towards me, not merely because it is right, but because concealment is impossible.

“ We will stop here. There is no haste required of us. Yesterday’s discourse will suffice for to-day, and for many days to come. Let what has already taken place be the subject of profound and mature reflection. Review, once more, the incidents of your early life, previous to your introduction to me, and, at our next conference, prepare to supply all those deficiencies occasioned by negligence, forgetfulness, or design, on our first. There must be some. There must be many. The whole truth can only be disclosed after numerous and repeated conversations. These must take place at considerable intervals, and when all is told, then shall you be ready to encoun-

ter the final ordeal, and load yourself with heavy and terrific sanctions.

“ I shall be the proper judge of the completeness of your confession. Knowing previously, and by unerring means, your whole history, I shall be able to detect all that is deficient, as well as all that is redundant. Your confessions have hitherto adhered to the truth ; but deficient they are, and they must be ; for who, at a single trial, can detail the secrets of his life ? whose recollection can fully serve him at an instant’s notice ? who can free himself, by a single effort, from the dominion of fear and shame ? We expect no miracles of fortitude and purity from our disciples. It is our discipline, our wariness, our laborious preparation that creates the excellence we have among us. We find it not ready made.

“ I counsel you to join Mrs. Benington without delay. You may see me when, and as often as you please. When it is proper to renew the present topic, it

shall be renewed. Till then we will be silent."

Here Ludloe left me alone, but not to indifference or vacuity. Indeed I was overwhelmed with the reflections that arose from this conversation. So, said I, I am still saved, if I have wisdom enough to use the opportunity, from the consequences of past concealments. By a distinction which I had wholly overlooked, but which could not be missed by the sagacity and equity of Ludloe, I have praise for telling the truth, and an excuse for withholding some of the truth. It was, indeed, a praise to which I was entitled, for I had made no additions to the tale of my early adventures. I had no motive to exaggerate or dress out in false colours. What I sought to conceal I was careful to exclude entirely, that a lame or defective narrative might awaken no suspicions.

The allusion to incidents at Toledo confounded and bewildered all my

thoughts. I still held the paper he had given me. So far as memory could be trusted, it was the same which, an hour after I received it, I burnt, as I conceived, with my own hands. How Ludloe came into possession of this paper,—how he was apprised of incidents to which only the female mentioned and myself were privy, which she had too good reason to hide from all the world, and which I had taken infinite pains to bury in oblivion, I vainly endeavoured to conjecture.

* * * * *

STEPHEN CALVERT.

STEPHEN CALVERT.

CHAPTER I.

YES, my friend, I admit the justice of your claim. There is but one mode of appeasing your wonder at my present condition, and that is, the relation of the events of my life. This will amply justify my choice of an abode in these mountainous and unvisited recesses, and explain why I thus anxiously shut out from my retreat the footsteps and society of men.

My present scene is without perils or vicissitudes. I cultivate my field of maize ; I ramble on the bank of the

lake*; I fish in a canoe made by my own hands; I eat the produce of my own labour; I hew the logs of which my dwelling is built; I conform all my measures to a certain standard of simplicity and order, and am rewarded by the uninterrupted enjoyment of health and tranquillity. I make no use of my rifle but to exterminate panthers and wolves. What my own hands do not supply me, I purchase from Canadian traders, and my poverty secures me, for the most part, from the visits of the Red-men.

For this solitude and labour I was induced to change my habits of corruption and idleness, by a just estimate of benefits and evils. I tried the world, and found it too abundant in temptation and calamity for me safely to remain in it. Some men, gifted with extraordinary endowments, or fortified by an auspicious education, may preserve their integrity[†] in

* Michigan.

every scene ; but, as to me, experience has taught me that I can be safe only by withdrawing from temptation, and can escape from guilt and remorse, only by interposing deserts between me and the haunts of mankind.

It was a taste not wholly incongenial with mine that led your steps hither. You are delighted with the aspect of rude nature. You reflect on the destiny for which this extensive wilderness is reserved. Scarcely half a century will elapse, before this desolation will give place to farms and villages, and commerce will be busy on the banks of the Ohio, and in the islands of this lake. You are willing to contemplate one stage in this memorable progress, and to view this region, covered as it now is, with marshes and woods. To these views I am indebted for this visit, and wish you would prolong it sufficiently to discover all the advantages of my condition.

Cast your eye over this wide expanse.

That waving and bluish line which almost blends itself with air, is a chain of rocky summits, ninety miles distant from the spot where we stand. They range along the opposite shore of the lake. Your eyes, unaccustomed to the scrutiny of distant objects, are, perhaps, unable to discover a darker spot which breaks the uniformity of this line. That is a lofty isle, about half way across, which contains six hundred acres of fertile ground. The banks are steep, and only accessible at one spot. This entrance was detected by me, by a rare fortune, and would probably escape the notice of any other. Here, if you please, you may take up your abode, and be in no danger of molestation or intrusion. Exuberant verdure, spouting rivulets, hickory and poplar shades, commodiously and sparingly distributed, preclude the necessity of any laborious preparation. No animal larger than squirrels and rabbits, can be found in it. There will, therefore, be no

foes, either of human or bestial kind, with whom you will be under the necessity of waging war. I will enable you to go thither, and assist you in making a plantation, and erecting a house.

But this scheme, desirable as it is, more experience of the evils of society may be necessary to induce you to adopt. Return, therefore, to the world, and when tired of its monotony, and disgusted with its iniquities, remember the Recluse of Michigan, and take refuge on this peaceful shore. Perhaps, this is a choice which can be recommended only by calamities similar to those which I have endured. There would be cruelty in wishing you a fate like mine ; and yet, if your course should terminate in the same manner, and misfortune should instruct you in the benefits of this seclusion, this wish might, perhaps, be reconciled to benevolence.

There is, indeed, little danger that the story of any other human being will resemble mine. My fate is marked by un-

common hues : neither imagination nor memory can supply you with a parallel. Of this, however, you will be more qualified to judge after my tale has been told. I have brought you hither for the purpose of relating it : now, therefore, lend me a patient ear.

My ancestry were English. If I had not long since dismissed the folly of annexing dignity to birth, I might lay claim to some respect on this account ; since I can number, in the founders of my line, some of those who aided the achievements of Rollo in France, and Bohemond in Syria. A younger branch of my family owes the dignity of baronet to the profusion of James the First, and the English usurpations in Ireland. He that first acquired the dignity, was Stephen Porter. This man, like the rest of the gentlemen of that age, conceived

that all merit was comprised in the profession of arms. He early enlisted in the Palatine wars, and relinquished the service of Gustavus only to take part in the contest between Charles the First and his Parliament.

When this contest was terminated, he retired to an ample patrimony which he possessed in Lancashire. Here, a life which had so often been exposed to pikes and bullets was destroyed by a stag, whose despair prompted him to turn upon his hunters. Sir Stephen's estate passed to his son, whose character was, in many respects, the reverse of that of his parent. He was indolent, vindictive, and irascible; and he carried the pride of birth to a ridiculous excess.

In the marriage choice he was governed by no considerations but those of family and property. His wife, however, chanced to possess many excellent qualities. These did not secure to her the affections of her husband. Some slight

opposition to his will changed his indifference to hatred, and compelled her to live apart from him. No time and no concessions on her part, could abate his animosity. He vowed never to admit her to his presence; and, when a friend, by means unsuspected by him, had brought about an interview, he not only spurned her from him as she kneeled at his feet, but challenged the officious agent, who expiated the offence by his death.

His separation from his wife was preceded by the birth of two sons. These were torn from the arms of their mother, and consigned to the care of hirelings. No solicitations could obtain from him permission that the mother should be indulged, even for a moment, with the sight of her offspring. This inflexible severity soon put a period to the life of this unfortunate lady.

The sons were educated at a foreign seminary, in the religious faith of their

father, which was that of Rome. One of them was the heir of the estate, and the other was intended by the father for the military service of Austria or Spain. In proportion as the younger advanced in age, and exercised his judgment, he found reason to disapprove of these parental schemes. He had been exposed, while in Flanders, to the arguments of a Protestant divine, who had nearly won over his belief. His return to England interposed to prevent or suspend his renunciation of his ancient faith; but his attachment to his country, and his love of the peaceful occupations of learning, made him irreconcilably averse to military service among foreigners. He knew, however, his father's inflexibility, his lofty notions of prerogative, and his impatience of contradiction. These reflections were a source of considerable inquietude.

The brothers arrived in London. The elder was a thoughtless and generous

youth, who was willing that his conduct and opinions should be moulded by convenience. He, therefore, readily complied with the will of his father, who had taken care, in his absence, to select for him a bride, and who had called him home for the purpose of fulfilling the contract. The younger, whose name was Stephen, was fraught with different sentiments and principles. He felt insuperable reluctance to pursue the path which was chalked out for him, while his obedience was enjoined by the most powerful considerations. With regard to property he was wholly dependent on his father; and his education had unfitted him for any servile or lucrative occupation. He was summoned, at the same time with his brother, to the paternal residence in Lancashire. He would willingly have dispensed with the interview, the purpose of which he knew to be the final settlement of plans for his future life; but this was not possible. He pre-

pared himself therefore for his journey, but eagerly sought and profited by any excuse that tended to delay.

At Chester he permitted a trifling impediment to detain him for some weeks. At the end of this time, an accident enabled him to perform a friendly office for a family who resided in the environs. The master of it, who was an exile from France, had been pursued by the vengeance of an hereditary enemy to his retreat. Assassins had been hired to destroy him; and, being apprised of his motions, they had posted themselves so as to encounter him on his return from the city to his own habitation. The timely interference of my father (for it is to this man that I am indebted for my being) rescued him from the power of the ruffians, and conducted him to his family; but not until he had received wounds which shortly put a period to his life. This incident gave birth to intercourse and friendship between my father and the

wife and daughter of the deceased. On making suitable inquiries as to their name and condition, he discovered the following particulars :

The Calverts were a noble family of Provence. Their domain consisted of obscure and elevated valleys, embosomed among those Alps which border upon Italy. They early became converts to the reformation, and the head of their family was renowned among the defenders of Rochelle. Persecution and war had nearly extirpated their race, and the only survivors were brothers of the name of Felix and Gaspard. These, on the revocation of the edict of Nantz, were driven into exile. The eldest first retired into Flanders, and, twenty years afterwards, emigrated to America. He purchased and cultivated ground on the bank of Delaware, just below its conflux with Schuylkill, where his antique and humble dwelling is still to be discovered.

The younger, who possessed some

property, in consequence of marriage, passed into England, and took up his abode in the neighbourhood of Chester. Here he led an obscure and indigent life till the institution of French regiments, under king William. He then obtained a command in the army, and signalized himself in Flanders. Thence he went to Ireland, and died of his wounds received at the siege of Limerick.

His daughter accompanied her father in all his perils. On his death she accepted the protection of a young officer of her own country. Wedlock succeeded, and they returned to their ancient abode, near Chester. Their union was productive of one child, to whose improvement and felicity their cares were limited.

This was he whose life was now sacrificed to private revenge, and, by whose death, his wife and daughter were deprived of their protector. My father easily invented excuses for postponing his

departure from this city, and for devoting most of his hours to the society of his new friends. The lady was a woman endowed with peculiar advantages of education, a zealous adherent to her faith, and eager to impart its benefits to others. My father's belief had already been undermined, and the exhortations of this eloquent apostle accomplished its destruction. Perhaps his facility of conviction might be partly owing to the charms of the young lady, of whom he speedily became enamoured, and of whose favour he could entertain no hope, as long as he adhered to what she deemed an idolatrous and detestable religion.

His condition was now changed, and his embarrassments greatly multiplied. A change of religion, the marriage of an outcast indigent, of obscure birth, and an heretic, were, in the eyes of his father, the deepest crimes that it was possible for him to commit. He would punish it by inexorable wrath, by rejecting all

claims to pecuniary assistance, and, perhaps, by the infliction of some greater evil. Sir Stephen was powerful and subtle, and would not scruple any means of vengeance on an occasion like this. If the son flattered himself that his personal safety would be unaffected, he could not hope but that the helpless object of his passion would incur the bitterest persecution. Means, at least, would be employed to raise an insuperable bar between them. His imagination contemplated no greater evil than this, and, in order to prevent it, he secretly embraced the Protestant religion, and prevailed upon the lady to consent to a private marriage. For the present, this marriage was solicitously concealed. He trusted that some propitious event would occur to put an end to the necessity of secrecy. A temporary separation now took place, and my father arrived at length at Sir Stephen's residence.

The intercourse between them proceeded for some time without any occurrence to ruffle its tranquillity. By judicious forbearance and a circumspect demeanour, Sir Stephen was prevented from imbibing any suspicion of the genuine condition and creed of his son. The future was occasionally mentioned, and the plan of foreign service alluded to, as something about which no hesitation or question could arise. No measures to effect this plan were immediately suggested. This delay Sir Stephen hinted to arise from a project of a more momentous and general nature, which had lately started into birth; and, in which, the efforts of his son would be wanted.

Stephen had a perfect reliance on the justice and fidelity of his brother, and therefore with regard to him, made no secret either of his change of religion or his marriage. Both of these were heartily disapproved by Henry; but one could not be recalled, and the other was

comparable by any strength which he could apply to the task; he, therefore, exerted himself to make the evil flowing from them as light as possible. He laboured to penetrate into the designs of his father, and insensibly to sway his thoughts conformably to the wishes of Stephen.

• In no long time, proposals were formally made to Sir Stephen, for marriage between his second son and a daughter of the Earl of Lucan, who had been King James's general in Ireland, and who had attained great wealth and honours in Spain. No alliance could more flatter the pride, bigotry, and avarice of this man. It coincided with his fondest schemes of military promotion, and as the young lady was maid of honour to the Spanish Queen the road would thus be open to the most illustrious elevation.

Stephen was seasonably apprized, by his brother, of these proposals. He had reason to regard himself as remarkably

unfortunate. Every new event seemed to conspire against him. He watched it in anxious expectation of a summons to his father's presence, in which this inauspicious union would be proposed to him.

This summons, however, was delayed. Week after week passed, and no intimation was received. It seemed impossible that an offer like this should be rejected, or that the indecorum of a slow or difficult acceptance would be practised; it was not less incredible that Sir Stephen should not hasten to impart the tidings of his good fortune to his son. The brothers, at length, began to doubt the truth of this intelligence, but a new and closer inquiry removed their doubts. Some interviews had taken place between Stephen and the lady, during some months' residence of the former at Madrid. At that time nothing existed to render this union undesirable; and the lady had been pursued by Stephen, with

a juvenile and incautious enthusiasm. Now, however, these crude feelings were supplanted by a rational attachment; and conscience, as well as love, regarded this alliance with horror.

In the midst of this perplexity, a message was delivered to my father, commanding him into Sir Stephen's presence. The purpose of this interview was easily divined. Obedience, however, was inevitable, and the interview took place. It was accompanied by much appearance of mystery. Solitude and a solemn hour were selected. Avenues were shut, and care taken that no listener should be posted near. These precautions being employed, Sir Stephen began by communicating to his son the proposals which had been offered and accepted on his behalf. He reminded my father of his former devotion to the lady; noticed the purity of her religion, the illustriousness of her rank, and the high station which she occupied at the Court of Spain; and

inferred that Providence could not have ordained an event more auspicious than this.

He easily anticipated the desires of his son, and experienced all the sympathy of a parent in his happiness ; but he appealed to my father, whether this were not a blessing which, in reality, outstripped his merits. He was young, and had hitherto made no sacrifice to duty, nor exerted his talents in any cause of national utility. Though much might be expected from his birth and education, yet, perhaps, it would be unreasonable to expect his consent to postpone this union on any consideration that could be proposed. Perhaps, indeed, in labouring to avoid the favourable prepossessions of a parent, he had passed into the opposite extreme, and underrated the zeal of his son in the cause of his country and of God. He should rejoice to discover that this was the case, and would therefore propose to him a scheme, for the sake of which

he might postpone his marriage ; because the disinterestedness of this conduct would enhance his title to the happiness that awaited him.

He then proceeded to unfold a plan of insurrection in favour of Charles Stewart, which had long been meditated by the English Catholics, and which the present was believed to be a suitable opportunity for carrying into effect. Caution was the soul of this enterprise, and men of long experience, deep views, and unconquerable perseverance, had been selected for this purpose. The concealment of all preliminary measures was indispensable to its success ; but Sir Stephen so little suspected the change that had taken place in the opinion of his son that he deemed it superfluous to enjoin secrecy.

Such is the imperfection of every scheme founded on imposture. Sir Stephen's character was well known. His devotion to the persecuted family and

faith of the Stewarts, his wariness, and penetration had raised him to the station of leader in this plot ; yet, such is the deceitfulness of appearances, that this man, unknowingly to himself, was now disclosing a scheme of rebellion and massacre to one whose principles compelled him to abhor the project, and who would probably conceive it his duty to counteract it by all his efforts.

He did not enter, in this first interview, into a minute detail of particulars. He mentioned no names, and vaguely alluded to the means which had been suggested. Enough, however, was unfolded to show the horror and extent of this treason. All lenient and dubious measures were rejected. The long triumph of heresy and usurpation required a rigorous and unrelenting hand. The sanctity and greatness of the cause would be disgraced by narrow schemes and effeminate scruples. The spirit of Charles the Ninth, and of Guy Faux, were applauded

as models of true heroism : and success was to be rendered certain by a blow which should exterminate, at a moment, every adversary. The king, his ministers, and three hundred of those whose opulence, and talents, and birth, rendered them obnoxious, were to perish in the hour when an invading army was to land in Scotland.

The agents of this destruction were to be sublimed above all selfish considerations. . . They were to devote their lives to this cause, and the same poniard which dispatched the victim, each assassin was immediately to turn against his own breast. Stephen was even allowed to suspect that the part most illustrious and arduous in this drama was reserved for him ; and that his claim to execute vengeance on the reigning prince would be readily admitted.

The interview ended with an admonition to deliberate on this proposal with calmness. The preference of public to

private good, the magnanimity of sacrificing love and life to the altar of the true God, and in the service of the rightful prince, were artfully insisted upon; but, if this effort were too great, he might fill an inferior part, and perform essential services without relinquishing these blessings. The possession of his mistress would merely be postponed, and his personal safety be, in a slight degree, endangered. He would assign no period to the deliberation of his son, but wait patiently till Stephen, having formed his determinations, should himself demand an interview.

The sensations with which my father parted from this conference may be more easily conceived than described. Concurrence in either of these schemes was impossible; yet what would be the consequence of refusing to concur? The real impediments must be disclosed, for no others would be deemed sufficient. What should screen him from the rage of his imperious father? He would not be

permitted to retire from the interview, in which his real situation should be disclosed, with life. Sir Stephen acknowledged no bounds to paternal prerogatives. The life which he gave, he believed to be forfeited by disobedience, and conceived himself authorised to take it away. But now, in addition to the crimes of disobedience and apostacy, the secrets of this plot resided with him; and, to prevent a discovery, his death would be inexorably exacted.

For a time my father was absorbed in fears for his own safety; but, at length, his thoughts were turned to the nature of that conspiracy which had thus been proved to exist. Was his duty limited to mere forbearance? Should he stand an idle spectator, while his religion and his country were destroyed? Was he not bound to communicate his knowledge of this plot, and exert himself in its suppression?

As his father's honour and life were involved in this disclosure, no wonder that this suggestion was a plenteous source of anxiety. He fled into solitude to avoid all witnesses to his perturbation. His purposes continually fluctuated. When he thought upon the extent of that ruin which was threatened, he felt himself disposed to prevent it, even by the ignominious execution of his father: but when he recollected his imperfect knowledge of the scheme, and its connection with invasion, which a thousand accidents might frustrate, he was again restored to irresolution and reluctance.

Meanwhile, some decision daily became more urgent. Some delay to concur in his scheme would be forgiven, and was expected by his father; but to protract his silence would excite suspicion. He felt irreconcilable repugnance to an interview in which his true condition should be disclosed; and yet was at a

loss by what other means to account for his aversion to the plot.

At length it occurred to him, that he might withdraw himself beyond the knowledge and the vengeance of his father. He might decline a second interview; immure himself in some remote and inaccessible corner, and live with his wife and her mother, beyond the circle of Stephen's operations and researches. His father might not only be kept in ignorance of his place of abode, his marriage, and his change of religion, but might be taught to believe that he was dead.

This scheme was highly advantageous: but the obstacles to its execution were not few. No part of the British Islands would be sufficiently secure. In Holland, he would be easily detected. Difficulty of subsistence would attend him every where. Some provision must be made for his immediate support in a foreign country. The means of secret and

unsuspected flight were neither obvious nor easy. My mother was pregnant, and the usual period had nearly elapsed. Until her delivery should have taken place, her removal was nearly impossible.

His visits to his family, who still occupied their ancient abode, had hitherto been frequent, but clandestine. Now the disturbance of his mind made him visit them more rarely. He had too much regard for the health of his wife to unfold to her the dangers of his situation; and to exclude from his countenance every token of the anguish of his mind, was an undertaking that surpassed his strength.

To forbear his visits entirely was, for similar reasons, improper. At one of these interviews the name of a person who dwelt in the neighbourhood was introduced in conversation. It appeared that he was one of those known by the appellation of Quakers; that his religious scruples had subjected him to numerous

vexations, from a continuance of which he was now preparing to escape, by emigration to the English colonies in America.

This incident suggested a train of ideas to my father, which terminated in a resolution to follow his example. Pennsylvania was remote, unvisited : subsistence was easily procured there : and thither it was less likely he should be pursued by paternal vengeance than to any other asylum. He might easily embark in London; and as he was personally known to few in that city, the interval previous to embarkation might be passed there with more security than elsewhere.

His marriage was an event known only to the parties themselves, his mother-in-law, and the clergyman who performed the ceremony, and who was now a chaplain to the regiment in garrison at Gibraltar. My mother was contented to endure the loss of reputation, because the seclusion in which she lived exposed

her to few of the inconveniences that flow from it. Her personal condition could not escape the notice of all, and was a source of some obloquy ; but even this she preferred to the publication of the truth. The knowledge of my father's visits would never have generated a suspicion that he was her husband. The world would merely have inferred the existence of an illicit connection ; but even this inference was precluded by the secrecy which all parties observed.

In due time this lady became the mother of twins. A feeble constitution hindered her from nursing both her children. One of them, therefore, was entrusted to the charge of a French woman, whose mother had been the companion of the flight of the deceased Madame de Calvert from Provence, and who had lately married an honest and thrifty farmer in the neighbouring district, by name Thurston.

This woman had been eminent for her

affection and fidelity to the Calverts; but it had not been deemed prudent by my mother to entrust her with the secret of the marriage. She was willing to sink in the good opinion of her servant, rather than to incur the least hazard of being betrayed. Alice cheerfully assumed the province assigned her, and divided with the stranger the tenderness due to her own child.

This obstacle being now removed, my father began to think seriously of the execution of his project. A second interview with Sir Stephen had not yet taken place. This delay was owing to a severe indisposition by which the latter had been seized. No more fortunate or seasonable occurrence could have happened; but the respite which it afforded was short. His recovery was speedily effected; and certain tokens had appeared, which showed that the procrastinations of my father had excited some suspicion. The necessity of removal became hourly more

urgent, but the want of money rendered it impossible.

Since his return to his father's house, the annual pittance formerly allowed to him had been withdrawn. Sir Stephen was far from being of a covetous temper, and his fortune was ample; but the scheme on which he had embarked his personal safety absorbed likewise all his revenue; and he whom the world considered as incessantly hoarding his income, and daily becoming more rich, distributed his wealth with so lavish a hand, as sometimes to reduce himself to absolute though temporary need.

In this strait my father bethought himself of relying on the friendship of his brother. He did not think proper to disclose to him the whole truth, but stated, as reasons for changing his abode, the impossibility of otherwise concealing his condition from Sir Stephen, and the indignation with which he should probably

be overwhelmed when the truth should come to be known.

These motives were deemed insufficient by Henry ; but finding my father proof against all his remonstrances, he readily consented to aid him in the execution of his scheme. Henry had been enriched, and thus rendered independent of his father, by his marriage. He offered to divide his possessions with his brother ; but Stephen was satisfied with a small sum at present, and with an annual remittance, until he should be able to provide for his own subsistence.

Philip Thurston had conceived the design of improving his fortune by emigration to America. His little property, however, could not be disposed of time enough for him to accompany my father. My mother's health disabled her from affording nourishment to more than one child. A substitute might, perhaps, have been found for Alice, but this woman had contracted a mother's fondness for

the babe which she nursed, and her fidelity was liable to no doubt. She entreated to be still allowed the care of the infant; and as her husband prepared to embark for the same port in America, in a few months, it was thought that no inconvenience would arise from leaving the infant in her charge. The separation would be brief; and this arrangement enabled them to keep Alice and her husband in their former ignorance as to that connection which subsisted between my father and the Calverts.

Suitable preparations being made, my father secretly embarked at London with his wife, her mother, and her son, in a ship bound to Philadelphia. Here they safely arrived, and, taking an obscure house, they hoped to enjoy the remnant of their days in tranquillity. My father assumed his wife's name, and permitted the world to consider him as one of the victims of the blind and destructive po-

licy of the French government in recalling its concessions to the Protestants.

Meanwhile, it will be supposed, that some impatience was felt for the arrival of the son who had been left in the care of Alice Thurston. Henry was apprised of the existence of this child, and of the views which had been adopted with regard to it. He had promised to bestow some attention on its welfare, and not to withdraw from it his guardianship until it was safely embarked. A punctual correspondence was maintained by the brothers.

The sudden disappearance of his son excited no small alarm in Sir Stephen. For a time he was willing to ascribe it to some casual and unimportant cause. At length his anxiety prompted him to set inquiries on foot. Stephen had appeared as usual at breakfast and dinner, but in the evening he was no where to be found. He had left behind him neither verbal nor written intimations of his absence.

The servants and tenants were unable to remove his uncertainty. Henry, when interrogated respecting his brother's destiny, pretended the same ignorance. More exact inquiries and extensive searches were made, but were no less ineffectual. Weeks and months rolled away, and produced no tidings of the fugitive.

As no conjecture was less probable than the true, time produced no cessation of the father's inquiries and doubts. At length he was compelled to acquiesce in the belief that the son had perished by some unwitnessed and untoward accident. This event was fatal to his fondest hopes, and he deplored it as the most signal calamity that could befall him.

Thurston found no difficulty in the disposal of his property, and was taking measures for entering on the meditated voyage, when he was attacked by a fever which, in a few days, put an end to his life. This event incapacitated Alice for

prosecuting her design. The Calverts used to be her counsellors in every difficulty, and she knew no others on whose sympathy or succour she could place dependence. Henry was speedily informed of this disaster. He saw that Alice, encumbered with two infants, and resigned to her own guidance, would be exposed to numerous embarrassments and dangers. Hence originated a scheme which he made haste to impart to his brother, and which he recommended with uncommon zeal. He proposed that Alice and the child should continue in England under his protection, and that as soon as his nephew should grow beyond the necessity of her care, he should be taken into his own family, and treated as his child.

The letter containing this proposal, was received by the vessel in which my father impatiently expected the arrival of Alice and her charge. Deep and almost insupportable, especially to my mother,

was this disappointment of their hopes. She was by no means inclined to adopt this proposal, but she yielded to my father's councils and wishes, and my brother was transferred to the family of Henry.

Time would, of course, reconcile my mother and father to separation from their offspring, especially as the change was so auspicious. Their fears, however, were quickly roused by the failure of a letter from my uncle, and by the receipt of an incoherent epistle from Alice, who, to their unspeakable astonishment and grief, informed them, first, of the death of Henry Porter, and, secondly, of the loss of my brother Felix. She related that the two children had been left alone for a few minutes, at the door of her cottage, in the dusk of evening, and that, on her return to the spot, Felix was missing. Her random and limited inquiries had led to no discovery.

The influence of such tidings may be

easily conceived. As to the fate of their infant son, there was room only for the gloomiest predictions. Such instances were not uncommon. Beggars and the vilest of mankind, were accustomed to make prize of helpless innocence, and train up the unfortunate subject of their theft to their own detestable profession. This lot was infinitely more deplorable than death. All the hope that remains to the parents in such cases, is, that negligence and cruelty may put a speedy end to the life of the unfortunate victim.

It is not certain that my mother would have long survived to sustain the anguish of these thoughts. A new occurrence diversified, and in some degree, alleviated their grief. If Henry Porter were dead, his father would, of course, become the guardian of his child and of his property. Letters had passed between the brothers, in which the secret of his flight, his marriage, and his conversion, were copiously related or intel-

ligibly alluded to. It was possible, that these letters, in obedience to the writer's injunctions, were destroyed; but it was likewise possible, that they had been preserved, and therefore had fallen into the hands of Sir Stephen. What use he would make of them, to what excesses his anger and his bigotry would transport him, were subjects of fearful conjecture.

In no long time, a letter was received, in which my father's apprehensions were confirmed. Sir Stephen was the writer. The sudden death of his eldest son had made him master of his cabinet, and all that my father desired to be concealed was known. The first burst of indignation in the mind of Sir Stephen was followed by impulses of terror, lest the unwary disclosure of his plot should have tended to defeat it. Rage yielded to policy. Alice was robbed of her charge, and my father was informed that the son was kept as a sort of pledge of his

fidelity. Maledictions and invectives were heaped upon the fugitive, the rights of kindred were disclaimed; but my father was flattered with impunity, provided he maintained an inflexible silence on certain topics.

This epistle assured my parents of the personal safety of their offspring; but they naturally inferred from it the incurable perversion of his principles. He would be trained in an obnoxious faith, and perhaps, kept in ignorance of his birth. To them, therefore, he was lost; and his destiny, though somewhat better than that for which they had before imagined him reserved, was more to be lamented than his death. Their affection was now concentrated in me, on whom they bestowed the name of my brother. My original appellation was Stephen, but henceforth I was called Felix.

CHAPTER II.

THE death of his brother deprived my father of the established means of his subsistence. It was necessary to discover some new method of supplying his wants. Several expedients were tried, but he at length decided in favour of the legal profession. To fit him for this pursuit, time and money must be previously consumed; and he reconciled himself to this necessity by the lucrative employment of his pen. A practical knowledge of conveyancing was easily gained, and by this he procured the means of subsistence till he was qualified for the bar.

Meanwhile, my father could not but reflect on that criminal project in which

he had been invited to concur. He was haunted by fears that his duty to his country enjoined upon him a different proceeding from that which he had adopted. At one time he painted to himself the scenes of confiscation and proscription which would ensue the success of this plot, and was almost prompted to abjure his silence, and hasten to disclose the knowledge he possessed. Then he revolved the numberless incidents which might occur to frustrate it, to hinder the conspirators from prosecuting their design, or detect it before its execution. This scheme was to coincide with a project of invasion; but France was the only power from which an attack could be dreaded, and the sceptical and pacific character of the regent duke of Orleans was well known. It seemed as if the jacobite enthusiasm had nearly vanished, and that the adherents of the exiled family must at length have discovered the desperateness of their cause.

Peace of mind was incompatible with these thoughts. My father's anxieties could not escape the watchful tenderness of his wife. It was easy for him to assign a plausible cause for appearances, very different from the true one; and his dissimulation succeeded for a time. He knew the consequences of disclosure, even to his bosom friend. My mother fostered a magnanimous spirit, and was an enthusiast in religion. What use she might conceive it her duty to make of her knowledge could not be foreseen. He recollected the penalty that had been menaced, if he should violate his faith, and these reflections fortified him in concealment.

But the impossibility of destroying the connection between thought and speech was eminently illustrated in my father's case. My mother was a jealous and perpetual observer. The negligent and yielding moment was skilfully employed, and the secret was extorted.

My mother had no ties of habit

affection to restrain her from compliance with the dictates of duty. She permitted her actions to be controuled by her husband, and forbore to make any other use of the knowledge she had acquired, than to exhort my father to unveil and defeat this plot. She proposed nothing less than that he should entrust the protection and subsistence of his family to Providence, and immediately embark for England, where he should hasten to communicate the particulars of this conspiracy to government.

Her remonstrances were earnest and incessant, and might probably have finally conquered his aversion, had not the next packet brought tidings which precluded the necessity of his interference. Intimations of this plot had been conveyed to the ministers, and Sir Stephen Porter was marked out as the principal agent. Messengers were secretly dispatched to arrest him. One hour before the messengers arrived at the end of their journey Sir Stephen

was engaged at dinner, with a numerous company. In the midst of their festivity, a person entered the hall, who whispered something in the ear of the host, and instantly retired. A pause of uneasiness and abstraction ensued. Sir Stephen, at length, rose from the table, and retired, under pretence of some unexpected and urgent business. Shortly after, the messengers arrived, but their victim had profited by this interval, to assume the disguise of a clown, and effect his escape. On the most diligent search, no papers, throwing any light on these transactions, could be discovered: either they had been burnt, or buried, or secreted, or, which was least probable, had been carried away by the suspected person.

These are the only facts relative to this plot which were made public. No further discovery, nor any other consequence, is generally supposed to have been produced. To this detection, however, it is probable that my father was indebted for an early and untimely grave.

He could not but rejoice at the defeat of so destructive a project, especially as the personal safety of his father had not been affected; but he that imparted this information to the government had probably stipulated for concealment. The conspirators, therefore, would remain ignorant of their betrayer: but were there not reasons to believe that Sir Stephen's suspicions would fall upon his son? Vengeance, cruel and implacable, would probably be excited in his bosom. His vengeance would fall on his defenceless child, and might extend to himself. This imagination could not fashion to itself the species of injury that was to flow from this source, but this uncertainty, by precluding him from the means of defence, only aggravated his terrors.

My mother partook of these anxieties. Time had some tendency to lighten them, but this effect was not allowed to be produced. One evening, four months after the receipt of this intelligence, a

letter was found by my father, in the entry of his house. It was couched in the following terms :

“ SIR,

“ You need not be informed of your offences: you know that they surpass those of the greatest criminals whose guilt has been recorded. You have rebelled against your God ; you have been a traitor to your rightful prince ; and, finally, you have done all that in you may, to bring your father to the scaffold. What punishment do you think you deserve ? Tremble ! Vengeance, though so long delayed, is now preparing to crush you !”

This epistle was written in an unknown hand, and was without superscription or signature. Its purport was fully comprehended. He was conceived to be the betrayer of this fatal project, and the dreaded vengeance was at length

to be inflicted. No condition is more deplorable than that in which my father was now placed. When we know that danger impends over us, but are unable to assign to it a distinct shape, there is no respite to our fears.

What measures of safety were adapted to his situation he knew not; or at what hour, and in what spot the toils were to close upon him. Whether his life would be taken, or his reputation destroyed, or his means of subsistence annihilated; whether he should be assailed in his own person, or in that of his wife, or whether both were to perish by a common fate, were questions not to be solved.

My father's mind was distinguished by some degree of imbecility. He allowed this incident to affect his happiness in a greater degree than a reasonable estimate of danger would justify. It was scarcely ever absent from his thought, and when present, it filled him with disquiet and suspicion. Solitude enhanced his fears,

and the aspect of a stranger was regarded with a shuddering he was scarcely able to conceal. He was careful to bar up all avenues to his house. Not only the windows, but the shutters of his chamber were closed. His dreams terrified him into wakefulness, and he was startled by the slightest sound, the cause of which was in any degree ambiguous.

My mother was endowed with a masculine and daring spirit. She was far from being devoid of apprehension, but her mind escaped more easily from it, and she was more inclined to extenuate the danger. My father conformed himself to many of her precepts ; but her efforts to encourage and console him on this occasion were resisted with an obstinacy which almost allowed room to suspect that terror had confused his intellect.

Among other precautions which he used was that of never venturing abroad at night. To this resolution he inflexibly adhered for some time ; but, at length,

there occurred an event which induced him to forego it.

A man of large fortune, who resided a mile beyond Schuylkill, was seized with a mortal disease. His death was predicted to be near ; and, in this extremity, my father, who had received from him many friendly offices, was summoned from the city to draw up his will. This summons was received at eight o'clock in the evening, and his immediate attendance was required. There were many motives to enforce compliance with the summons. It was probable that in the disposal of his estate, this person would not forget my father, whom he had always distinguished by marks of peculiar regard. He had requested my father's attendance, on this occasion, as a favour ; and, to refuse without assigning any plausible reason, might be expected to give offence. The scruples of the dying man were fastidious on this head, and my father's refusal might, at least, occasion a delay which

perhaps might hinder the will from being made. In that case the sick man's property would be given, by the law, to ~~some~~ ^{those} in whose hands it would merely be an instrument of vice and oppression ; whereas, a testamentary act would probably transfer it to those whose personal merits and wants gave them an unquestionable title.

Notwithstanding these reasons for going, my father would have declined the task, had not my mother's remonstrances interposed. With much reluctance, and a bosom filled with dreary forebodings, he set out upon his journey. The messenger who brought the summons accompanied him, and contributed, in some degree, to his security. It was resolved that he should postpone his return till the next day.

Her husband having gone, my mother composed herself to rest as usual. The succeeding day was stormy and inclement. My father did not appear. The

state of the atmosphere would naturally account for his detention ; but my mother's mind was not free from uneasiness. The question could not fail to occur, would not her husband quiet those alarms which he knew that his absence would excite, by dispatching a messenger to acquaint her with the cause of it ? The patient might indeed be dead, and the sorrow and confusion consequent on such an event might exclude all other thoughts.

The succeeding night she passed in like manner alone, but not without a great increase of uneasiness. On the second day, at noon, her suspense became too painful to be longer endured, and a man and horse were dispatched to procure some tidings of his situation. The messenger speedily returned with a letter from the lady who superintended the family of Mr. Thompson, informing her, that her husband, having performed the business for which he came, had im-

mediately left the house on his return to the city ; that he had been earnestly solicited to postpone his departure till the next day, but had persisted in his resolution to go immediately. He had set out on foot, though a horse had been offered him.

On returning, as on going, it was requisite to cross the ferry. Inquiry being made, it was found that he had not applied for a passage at the river. What then had become of him? Diligent searches were made ; but none of them were effectual. Six weeks passed away, and no tidings of his destiny were received. At the end of that period a dead body was discovered concealed among the reeds, at low water, on the left shore of League Island. The remnant of clothes which still adhered to him, served to ascertain this to be the body of my father.

No marks of violence being discoverable, it was unavoidable to conclude that

he had been drowned. It was difficult to conceive that chance had occasioned this event. My mother had some reason to believe it to be the result of a malignant stratagem, and the accomplishment of that vengeance that had been threatened. Her fancy teemed with distressful images. In her dreams she beheld him set upon by ruffians, his speech inhumanly stifled, and his body cast into the river. By this means their cunning would best avoid not only detection but suspicion.

Sometimes she admitted a doubt whether he had not been the author of his own destruction. His resolution, suddenly conceived, to return to the city alone, on foot, and at midnight, so opposite to the usual tenour of his conduct, and so apparently unnecessary, was remembered. He had often expressed his impatience of existence, linked as it was with incessant and excruciating fears. His profession was

obnoxious to all his indolent and literary habits, and he had placed considerable dependence on the generosity of Thompson. A trifling legacy, however, was all that was bequeathed to him. These causes might have concurred to sink him to despair, and prompt him to this act of self-violence.

This event deprived my mother not only of a protector and friend, but of the means of subsistence. I was three years of age at this time, and was therefore helpless and wholly dependent on her care. Her mother had died shortly after their arrival in America, and the pittance which that lady had enjoyed in right of her husband, ceased to be paid. My father's profession had supplied merely his daily wants. His friends were numerous, but my mother's exigencies were of the most urgent and momentous kind, and such as common friendship could hardly be expected to obviate.

In this desolate state she was not de-

serted by her fortitude. She deliberated calmly on the best means of supplying her wants. She possessed considerable accomplishments, and was encouraged to institute a sort of boarding-school for a small number of female pupils. This scheme was conducted with remarkable skill and success. Her character and situation being known, her terms, though more expensive than was common, were readily accepted. The best families in the province contended with each other for the benefits of her tuition. She limited herself to six girls, and these being selected at a very early age, and being wholly consigned to her care, she contracted for them all the fondness, while she exercised the authority of a parent.

When I had attained my sixth year, I was sent to a public school, which a Scotch adventurer had established at the town of Woodbury, in New Jersey. The plan of this establishment was comprehensive, and all the learning, (which

indeed was small,) that it was thought proper for me to acquire, was acquired in ten years under this man's direction.

During this period my mother had discharged every obligation to her pupils. She had dissolved her family, and retired to a habitation near Burlington, which the generosity of a deceased friend, and the profits of her school, had enabled her to purchase. On leaving Woodbury, I retired to her house. The management of domestic concerns was divided between us. My chief employment consisted in the cultivation of the garden which appended to the mansion, and which supplied us with the greater part of our annual provision. Health, and pleasure, and agricultural improvement, were blended in this pursuit; and these few acres afforded a perpetual theatre for contemplation and experiment. The intervals were spent in the recreations of poetry and music, and in the society of my mother, the excellence of whose cha-

racter became the more conspicuous the more closely and constantly it was inspected.

For some years there was nothing to disturb my repose. I was molested by no gloomy anticipations of the future. The property which I should inherit from my mother would suffice for the abundant supply of all my wants, and I felt no desire to augment it. In this immovable calm there was no temptation to lead aside, or passion to bewilder my steps.

The first incident that called away my thoughts from this scene, was connected with the fate of my family in Europe. Sir Stephen Porter, refusing to obey a summons to return and subject his conduct to legal examination, was attainted. His estate was confiscated, but restored, by the bounty of the prince, to his grandson Henry. This person, to whom I stood in the relation of cousin, now entered into his majority, and into the possession of his estate. He became early

apprised of the fortunes of his uncle, and was influenced, by a sense of justice, to assist his aunt and his cousin to the utmost of his power. He had been solicitously trained in the Romish religion, but had formally abjured it. This served as an additional incitement to repair the evils which my father had incurred, in consequence of a similar deportment. It was not till after long and painful searches, and the intervention of some propitious chance, that he traced us to our retreat on the banks of Delaware. A correspondence then commenced between my mother and him, in which he persuaded her to resume her ancient country, and to accept of a liberal provision.

Her estimate of happiness was too correct to permit her to accept his offers. Finding her invincible, he addressed himself to me in the same terms, and solicited me to come and partake with him in all the goods which fortune had bestowed upon him.

My youthful and untutored imagination was delighted with the pictures which he drew, and I was sufficiently inclined to adopt his proposals; but I could not hesitate to sacrifice these crude visions to the desires of my mother, and to prefer being her companion and consoler to any other office. I could not forget, however, that her feeble constitution, and the course of nature, must put a speedy end to her life, and then there would exist no impediment to the adoption of this scheme.

My cousin had made strenuous exertions to ascertain the destiny of my lost brother. Alice, his nurse, had been extricated by him from hardship and poverty, and sent to America. She was now become my mother's sole and faithful domestic; but all his efforts to recover the lost Felix were unavailing. On this topic I was chiefly prone to indulge a romantic disposition. My recluse, literary, and bookish education, tended to

imbue me with the refinements of sentiment and the heroism of friendship. I was without compeers and associates, and those sympathies which are always ardent at my age wasted themselves on visionary objects. I consoled myself with the belief that my brother was still alive, and that a meeting would one day take place between us. For want of experience I imagined that there was something peculiarly sacred and tender in the bond of brotherhood, and that this tie was unspeakably enhanced by the circumstance of being ushered into being together ; of being coeval in age, and alike in constitution and figure : these resemblances being supposed by me to exist, in those cases, in an eminent degree.

The sensations that flowed from these ideas were not always pleasurable. I was conscious that eternal and insuperable obstacles to our meeting might very possibly exist ; and this persuasion was a fertile source of ~~grief~~ ~~regret~~. I believed that

the chance of separation was increased by the remoteness and seclusion of my present residence, and would be diminished by crossing the Atlantic. This belief was no inconsiderable recommendation to the scheme proposed by my cousin. This scheme, however, was utterly impracticable till the death of my mother. Till this event should take place, I expected and desired to remain in my present abode; but my expectations were frustrated from a quarter whence obstacles seemed least likely to come.

CHAPTER III.

I HAVE mentioned that one of the Calverts, whom the bigotry of Louis the Fourteenth drove into exile, had, after many years residence in Flanders, emigrated to America. He brought with him money sufficient for the purchase of what, in Europe, would be deemed a spacious domain. Here he devoted himself to agriculture, and the gradual increase of population augmented the value of his estate, till he became respectable among his neighbours for opulence.

He was succeeded in the possession of this ground by a Frenchman, remotely allied to him, and of the same name, to whom he had married his daughter. This person, whose name was Ambrose Cal-

vert, had insinuated himself, by a long train of hypocrisy, into the good opinion of the last possessor. His habits of dissimulation, in some degree, continued after his accession to the property. He was as punctual as ever in the forms of religious worship, was as strictly observant of the Sabbath, excluded as austere all mirth from his features, and levities from his deportment. In these respects he was uniform to the end of life; but in other particulars he conceived himself, by the death of the elder Calvert, delivered from all restraint, and at liberty to obey the genuine impulse of his temper.

This temper was the cause of suffering to those only who were subjected to his power. In his intercourse with his neighbours and with the world his brow was smooth, his accents tempered into sweetness, and his whole deportment a model of urbanity and graciousness. He was just, and even ~~was~~ ^{was}, in his dealings

with others, and was always more prone to yield up than to persist in his claims. Little would a casual observer suspect that this man was the slave of ferocious and immitigable passions; that he was a domestic tyrant, and exercised the sternest cruelty in the government of his family and slaves.

His fields were cultivated by Africans. To these he did not allot disproportionate tasks, or condemn them to the use of poor, scanty, or unwholesome food, or deny them necessary, or even decent clothing. His disposition was remote from avarice, but it was savage and capricious. He inflicted on them the most excruciating punishments for the most trifling offences. He made little or no discrimination in the choice of objects of his wrath. No tenderness of age or sex, no degree of fidelity or diligence, exempted from suffering the unfortunate beings who were placed under his yoke. His imagination conceived crimes when

they were wanting; and that was an unexpiable offence at one time, which, at another was laudable or indifferent. When in a sullen mood, merely to smile in his presence was guilt, and incurred inhuman chastisement.

His wife was of a soft and compassionate temper. Many of the servants were of the same age, born and reared under the same roof, and regarded with somewhat of sisterly and maternal emotions. Her father's government had been full of lenity and prudence; and nothing had occurred, previous to his death, which indicated a contrary disposition in her husband.

When, therefore, he dropped the mask, the reverse was the more disastrous and astonishing. The tears, the shrieks, and the deep traces of the lash, in those who had formerly been treated with nearly as much forbearance and affection as herself, were sources of horror and grief never before endured. To be

a silent and passive spectator was impossible ; but his cruelty was only exasperated by intercession and remonstrance. By persisting in these, his affection appeared gradually to be withdrawn from her, and she sunk, by rapid degrees, from the condition of equal into that of a slave.

Her education and temper were of that kind which made contempt and indignity more insupportable to her than stripes and blows. The former, however, were only introductory to the latter ; and her untimely death bore witness to the acuteness of her sufferings. Even at this distance I cannot trust myself with the task of describing his enormities. When I think of them, abhorrence and rancour arise in my heart, from which I endeavour to escape by diverting my attention to other objects.

One daughter, Louisa, was the fruit of this union. Her mother died soon after her birth. Her ~~education~~ education, during her

early years, was nearly the product of chance. Her grandfather, who had not been destitute of literary propensities, left behind him some books, to which in the abundance of her leisure, she betook herself in search of amusement. From these she gleaned crude and numerous ideas, which time, and more judicious instruction, finally converted into useful and admirable knowledge.

She was not exempted from parental tyranny. If this had been limited to stern commands, loud rebukes, and intervals of sullen silence, it would, by habit, have been rendered, perhaps, endurable; and these, it should seem, were sufficient antidotes to content: but these were bounds by which his passion was not accustomed to be circumscribed. I shudder to think of the excesses of which this unhappy girl was the victim. How deeply it is to be regretted, that the happiness of one being should be swayed by the perverseness of another! From the first dawning reflection till the age of

fifteen, pain and fear were almost the perpetual companions of Louisa Calvert. The solace of society, the blessings of liberty, were denied to her. All the affections of her heart were chilled and curbed. No vigilance or caution could give her any security against mistreatment. If a known path, however dark, intricate, and rugged, had been assigned to her, and her safety was made wholly to depend upon her adherence to it, her lot would have been less deplorable, but the caprice of her father was wholly irregular. He seemed to act by the instigations of a demon, and to be impelled by pure, unadulterated malice.

In her fifteenth year her condition underwent a change. Her father made occasional journies to the city, which was ten miles from his place of residence. Hither, late in autumn, his engagements chanced to call him. He proposed to return on the evening of the same day. The evening elapsed, however, without

producing any token of his approach. His daughter was, by this delay, thrown into a state of considerable perplexity. Whether she should await his arrival, or retire to her chamber, leaving a female servant to attend his coming, was a question on which much depended, but which she was unable to decide.

The mood in which Calvert might return, might make him condemn her retirement as disrespectful, or her watchfulness as officious ; and his absurd rage would vent itself in blows and contumelies. After some fruitless deliberation, she concluded to go to bed.

There is an energy in the human mind which enables it to conquer every inquietude, or a flexibility that reconciles itself to every constraint. Louisa was gifted with that temper which is not easily bereaved of cheerfulness. Her condition was well known ; and no one acquainted with it could refrain from expressing their wonder at the fortitude

with which she supported its unparalleled and complicated evils. There were moments, however, when her soul was nearly overwhelmed with the perception of her wretchedness, and when she even admitted a doubt whether death, inflicted by her own hand, was not preferable to a being like hers.

Mournful sensations happened to be particularly prevalent on this occasion, and she lay sleepless and listening to the signal which should announce her father's approach. This signal was at length heard, but it was obliged to be frequently repeated before the slumbers of the girl, who remained below, were broken. Louisa shuddered as she reflected on the probable consequences of this negligence. Her fears, in this respect, were not groundless, and Calvert no sooner obtained admittance than he proceeded to inflict on the culprit the most barbarous chastisement.

The sufferer, whose name was Althea,

had been the playfellow, and was the affectionate attendant of her young mistress. Her form and features were delicate and regular, and her complexion so remote from jet, that the conjecture was generally admitted that her father was Calvert himself. These circumstances, in addition to the loneliness of her state, and the want of suitable associates, fostered in Louisa a sisterly affection for her waiting maid. She partook in all the studies and amusements of her mistress.

From the nature of her functions, in the performance of which she seldom had need to enter into the presence of the tyrant ; from the unwearied diligence of Louisa to screen her from animadversions ; and, perhaps, from some movements of paternal tenderness, she had hitherto, for the most part, escaped that treatment to which her companions in servitude had been condemned.

Every blow which she now received struck upon the heart of Louisa, and she

bitterly lamented that she had not, by remaining below, encountered his resentment. Her thoughts were quickly recalled to the consideration of her own safety, for, in a few minutes, Calvert relinquished his present victim and burst into her chamber. He began with heaping on her those reproaches which were usually the prelude to personal violence. This she summoned up her magnanimity to bear without repining. Having exhausted his abuse, he proceeded to inform her of his solemn resolution, that she should not remain a moment longer under his roof, and commanded her to rise instantly and leave his house.

Menaces to this effect had frequently been uttered by him in the career of passion, but they were considered as momentary suggestions; and when his paroxysm had passed, were mutually forgotten. Now, however, he did not content himself with threats, but showed himself immovably resolved.

Louisa enjoyed the compassion of all, but the friendship of none. She was little less than an absolute stranger to every one beyond her father's threshold. Exiled from this roof, she knew of no place of refuge, or even of momentary entertainment. In vain she endeavoured, by entreaties, to avert this sentence, or at least to delay the execution of it. Her opposition only exasperated his rage, and transported him beyond all bounds of humanity. He seized her by the hair, and dragging her to the door, thrust her forth without mercy, and locked the entrance against her.

Her dress consisted merely of a thin and long robe which covered all her limbs ; but her neck and feet were bare. Winter had already begun its progress by disrobing the trees of their leaves, and whitening the ground with frost. It was midnight, and the atmosphere was cloudy and tempestuous. Such were the circumstances in which this inhu-

man father thought proper to turn his child out of doors.

For a time, she flattered herself that as his passion subsided, he would see the monstrosity of this act. She waited at the door in vain. The chillness of the atmosphere began at length to be felt; despair took possession of her bosom, and she dragged her trembling limbs to a short distance from the house.

The plantation next to that of her father was bounded by the opposite side of the road. Annexed to it were two barns, one of which, smaller in size, and but little used, was sixty or eighty feet from Calvert's door. The first impulse was to go thither and screen herself from the piercing wind, by interposing this building between her and the northern blasts. She hoped likewise to find some hay scattered in its neighbourhood, by which her feet might be protected from the cold. Both of these purposes were in some degree answered, and she found

herself at leisure to ruminate on the deplorableness of her condition.

The proprietor of the next plantation was a man of a very different character from Calvert. He had marked with disapprobation the excesses of his neighbour, and sometimes endeavoured, by remonstrances, to check his career. Some occasion had required him to leave his bed on this night, and his station happened to be such as to make him a witness of the scene that took place at Calvert's threshold. He followed the lady to her retreat, and quickly making himself known to her, easily prevailed upon her to take shelter under his roof.

Next morning he paid a visit to her father. I have said, that Calvert, in his intercourse with the world, was a strict observer of politeness. His treatment of this guest was by no means an exception to his maxims, but he absolutely refused to re-admit his daughter.

My mother was a distant relation of

the sufferer, and the only person in America from whom relationship gave her any claim to protection. Louisa's present protector willingly assumed that province, and would not have consigned it to another with any other view than the superior advantage of this young lady. He applied, therefore, to my mother for her advice on this occasion. My mother had recently lost her husband, and was just established in her new profession. She could not hesitate long how to act in this exigence, and Louisa thenceforth enjoyed under her roof all the delights of social intercourse, and the benefits of maternal superintendence.

For a time, her father appeared wholly careless of her destiny. Being at length informed of her condition, his jealousy of paternal authority, and his malignant temper, made him desire her return. He deemed himself entitled to her implicit obedience, and therefore demanded the unconditional possession of her. Had

Louisa been left to her own guidance, no doubt she would have readily complied ; but my mother interfered, and prevailed upon her to continue in her new abode. No small firmness was required to resist the authority and menaces of Calvert, and fortify the wavering and timid temper of his daughter.

The cruelty of Calvert, by occasioning, as was strongly suspected, the death of her favourite Althea, took away her most powerful inducement to return. This event might be partly owing to regret for the loss of her young mistress, whom she tenderly loved ; but there was likewise reason to ascribe it to inhuman treatment from her master. For many years after, her fate could never be thought upon by Louisa without impatience, or her name be mentioned without tears.

Calvert, finding my mother inflexible, informed her that he would not only refuse to discharge the expense of his daughter's subsistence, but would punish

her disobedience by excluding her from all share in his estate after his decease. These threats were not likely to influence my mother's conduct. The inheritance of his estate would by no means compensate Louisa for the privation of all instruction and enjoyment during his life. Besides, she trusted to the favourable influence of time, and believed, that the approach of death would make a change in his views.

From this period to the dissolution of her little college, Louisa was my mother's companion. The same generous benefactor who bequeathed a portion of her effects to my mother, gave to Louisa the property of three bonds, on the interest of which, by the practice of the most rigid economy, she was able to subsist. To effect this purpose, she was obliged to limit her expenses to little more than necessities, and to perform many personal and household offices for herself. The abode which she selected, and which was

recommended by its cheapness, its picturesque scenes, its salubrious air, and its vicinity to the residence of her dearest friends, was eight miles from the town of Lancaster. Here she pursued occupations and amusements which, at first, were prescribed by necessity, but soon became the dictates of choice.

My mother's plan of education was wholly singular and unexampled. Hence her pupils, while they were bound to each other, and to her, by similitude of tastes and opinions, were placed in irreconcilable opposition to the rest of mankind. That friendship, which residence under the same roof and perpetual intercourse for ten years were calculated to produce, did not languish or expire during their separation. Half the year was usually spent by Louisa at the house of one or other of her friends.

All intercourse between the parent and child had ceased from the moment when her final resolution was known, to avoid

her father's habitation. He acted, on all occasions, just as if she had ceased to exist. Surrounded with the slaves of his will, and shut out, partly by necessity and partly through choice, from intercourse with the rest of the world, he spent several years in the unrestrained indulgence of his passions. At length, he was attacked by an acute disease, which shortly brought his life to a close.

It was now to appear whether he had carried to his grave the enmity which he had fostered against his daughter. If her claim to preference should be disallowed, it did not appear that there was any other person in the world entitled to this preference. Those by whom he was surrounded were his slaves, to whom he was actuated by no sentiment but that of hatred. The rest of mankind were unknown, and must, therefore, be supposed to be indifferent to him. What, therefore, must my astonishment have been, on receiving a letter, shortly after his de-

cease, from a respectable inhabitant of Philadelphia, announcing himself as joint executor with me in the will of Calvert, and informing me that, by this will, I was constituted successor to all his property.

Calvert and I had had no intercourse, and my mother must have been to him an object of resentment. No event, therefore, was more contrary to my expectations. It was a new proof of the capriciousness of this man's temper. My surprise quickly yielded place to considerations as to the mode in which I should conduct myself in my new situation.

I was now become proprietor of three hundred fertile acres, in a commodious and healthful situation, a spacious and well furnished mansion, and fifteen negroes. My wants were already copiously supplied; and any deficiency was ready to be made up by my English cousin. With relation to myself, therefore, this event was no topic of congratula-

tion. In a different view it was to be regarded with pleasure. The produce of this estate might be applied to far better uses than had been chosen by Calvert. His slaves would henceforth receive the treatment that was due to men, and their happiness be as sedulously promoted as it had been heretofore counteracted. I could not fail to perceive the superiority of Louisa's claim to this property, both as the daughter of Calvert, and as a being of uncommon worth, destitute of the means of agreeable and respectable subsistence. I needed not to be stimulated by my mother to an act of justice, and speedily resolved to transfer this property to Louisa Calvert.

Meanwhile it was necessary to visit and take possession of this estate. I prepared for an immediate journey. My ignorance of the world, and my speculative education, made this expedition of uncommon importance. I

had hitherto pursued an humble and familiar tract, and was oppressed with a consciousness of wanting a guide and instructor in the new path on which I was entering.

I shall not dwell upon the sensations which novelty produces, and whose existence is necessarily transient. The requisite forms were easily dispatched, and possession of my new inheritance acquired. The land was in the highest state of cultivation, and habits of diligence and regularity had been so long established among the slaves, that affairs proceeded in their usual course, notwithstanding the death of the late proprietor.

In the management of a plantation like this, it is requisite to select one to whom the whole authority may be occasionally delegated, and with whom the master may divide the task of actual superintendence. In the choice of a deputy, Calvert had exercised his usual

judgment. Cæsar, the eldest of the slaves, had a perfect knowledge of agriculture, was fertile in expedients, vigorous in foresight, and of unblameable fidelity. Cæsar, therefore, was invested with the office of steward. Habits of command, and the influence of example, had a tendency to deprave him ; but this tendency was checked by the precautions of Calvert, who not only withheld from him the power of inflicting punishment, but even prohibited him from the use of harsh and reproachful language.

These measures were not adopted by Calvert from a beneficent regard to the welfare of his servants, or from a knowledge of the cruelty which is sure to characterise a slave in office. They proceeded from an imperious temper which could not endure that any slave of his should lose sight of his dependent condition, and was unwilling to part, even for a moment, with his tyrannical prerogatives. Hence Cæsar was obliged to se-

cure obedience to his mandates by a mild and equitable deportment ; and hence their attachment to his person was proportioned to their antipathy for Calvert.

Their new master was by no means disposed to revive the system of oppression under which they had suffered so long. The management was continued in the hands of Cæsar ; and, after a short stay at Calverton, I returned to the city. I purposed to return to Burlington ; but my curiosity, as well as my scheme with regard to Louisa Calvert, detained me in the city for some time. This lady had contracted an engagement with one of her friends and fellow pupils, who was lately married, and settled in this city, to spend two or three months with her. A fortnight was to elapse before her intended arrival ; and it had been preconcerted, that, after her visit to Mrs. Wallace was performed, she should bestow the favour of her company, for an equal period, on my mother at Burlington.

It will not surprise you that I eagerly desired an interview with this lady. The boon which I had to bestow was not inconsiderable, and there seemed some propriety in obtaining a personal knowledge of the object of this benefit previously to conferring it. A letter from my mother introduced me to Mrs. Wallace ; and her husband, whose profession was that of a lawyer, had aided me in the execution of Calvert's testament. Hence, in this family, I was admitted on a familiar and confidential footing ; and here my opportunities of intercourse with their expected visitant, would be frequent and favourable.

I have mentioned that my character contained no small portion of enthusiasm. I had mused on ideal forms, and glowed with visionary ardours. At this age there is an inexplicable fascination attendant upon our sex, and I was, in an eminent degree, the slave of this enchantment. My fancy was perpetually figuring to

itself a train of consequences to flow from any casual occurrences ; and, where marriage was possible to be introduced, it was never omitted. I had never seen Louisa Calvert, but had listened, on numberless occasions, to eulogiums on her character, pronounced by my mother. Her image, therefore, was oftener presented to my mind than that of any other female. It could not but happen that my reveries would sometimes suggest the possibility of marriage ; but this idea was thwarted by the timorousness of youth, which made me depreciate my own claims to such felicity, by the consciousness of poverty, and, chiefly, by the unlikelihood that, in our respective situations, any meeting would take place between us.

A surprising revolution had removed many of these obstacles. From the conduct which I intended to pursue, I should derive some merit, and, at the same time, remove the obstacle which poverty had

created. My acquaintance with the Wallaces, and her residence in this family, would bring us to the knowledge of each other under the most favourable auspices. Love is an ambiguous and capricious principle. That I was prepared or resolved to love this woman, is not, perhaps, an adequate description of my state. The delineations of her form and mind had been vivid and minute, and these had been truly lovely. I entertained no doubt that my destiny, in this respect, was now accomplished. My anticipations of an interview awakened all those golden dreams and delicious palpitations which are said to characterise this passion. Must it not, therefore, be inferred that I was in love?

Still it is apparent that my passion was merely the creature of fancy, and, as such, liable to be suddenly extinguished or transferred to a new object.

My mother's consent to my remaining in the city was easily obtained. I did not

conceal from her my views with respect to Louisa, and they obtained her ardent approbation. The tenor of her discourse and wishes, frequently hinted, that she might live to see me allied to a woman equally excellent, had no small influence on my meditations. These were likewise assisted by the eulogies of Mrs. Wallace, to whom the virtues of her friend constituted an inexhaustible theme.

My social intercourse was limited to a small circle. Besides this family, I was conversant with no one but a young man, my equal in age, though eminently my superior in wisdom, byname Sidney Carlton. He was the brother of Mrs. Wallace, and newly initiated into the legal profession. I met him at his sister's house, which he constantly frequented, and where I supped in his company every evening. It was this man whose existence was the source of the first uneasiness which I had ever known, and who was

indirectly the author of all my subsequent calamities.

As the brother of Louisa's friend, and as one entitled, by that relationship, as well as by his native worth, to the good opinion of Louisa, he quickly appeared to me in an interesting and formidable light. He was regarded by his sister with an affection little short of idolatry. He was almost an inmate of the house. His intercourse, therefore, with the visitant, would be without restraint, and almost without intermission. His sister would exert herself to unite two persons so equally and passionately loved, and his merit was of so transcendent a kind that all ideas of rivalry were vain.

These thoughts might have tended to repress all hope ; but I was rescued from despondency by reflecting on the capriciousness of passion, on the contrariety that frequently subsists between the dictates of desire and the injunctions of reason. Love is a motley and complex sen-

timent. It is the growth, not of reason but of sense. The concurrence of reason may be requisite to make it a principle of action in persons of unusual elevation and refinement, but not in ordinary cases. The understanding may approve, and fortify, and prolong the existence of the passion, but this can never be the source of its existence.

Highly as I esteemed of the discernment and intelligence of my cousin, I did not believe her exempt from sexual impulses. I believed her capable of being dazzled and seduced, by a demeanour characterised by all the impetuosity and tenderness of passion, by dexterity and fluency of elocution, by romantic generosity of sentiment, and by elegant proportions and expressive features. In all these particulars my vanity taught me to believe myself superior to Sidney.

In these reflections I found an antidote to my fears. I was attentive to the sentiments and conduct of Sidney and of his

sister, and met with nothing to persuade me that the esteem which the former was always eager to express for the absent lady was connected with love. No fits of abstraction, no changes of hue took place when her name was mentioned, or the circumstances of her journey were discussed. These perturbations were felt only by myself.

My tranquillity, however, was destined to be interrupted. One evening, my cousin being mentioned, Mrs. Wallace told me that her coming was expected on the next day. These tidings were, as was easily guessed, communicated in a letter. But my surprise and embarrassment were not a little excited when I discovered that this letter had been addressed not to Mrs. Wallace, but to her brother, and that an epistolary correspondence had subsisted between him and Louisa for a long time.

This proof of confidence between them then awakened all my fears. My confu-

sion and dejection could not be concealed; but the apparent folly of this motive, hindered my friends from suspecting its influence. My deportment was frequently regarded by them as enigmatical. My fits of hope and of fear, of dejection and vivacity, were to them wholly inexplicable.

I was at first deterred, by a thousand scruples, from requesting the perusal of this letter. The first intimation which I dropped was instantly complied with. Not only this letter was put into my hand, but an offer made me of perusing all the letters that had passed between them. The offer was accepted with a mixture of trepidation and joy. I shut myself up in my chamber to peruse them.

I read with eagerness and wonder. The scene exhibited by this correspondence was new. Sidney was four years older than his friend, and their intercourse by letter had lasted during a period equal to this. It began with avowals of love on the part of Sidney, which the

lady had rejected. This rejection was unaccompanied with anger and contempt. It was softened by every token of regret, by every proof of reverence, and by pathetic intreaties, that her incapacity to love him might not prove a forfeiture of his esteem, or a bar to their future intercourse.

This procedure appeared to have been regarded by the lover in its true light. Professions of love ceased to be made. The passion, lately so vehement, seemed to be extinguished in a moment, and to give place to the solicitude and fondness of a brother.

A fearlessness of false construction, absolute purity of purpose, and an unbounded disclosure of every sentiment, distinguished the correspondence that ensued between them. Every sentence was pregnant with novelty and instruction. A degree of unreserve was mutually practised, the possibility of which, between persons of a different sex,

unconnected by kindred or by passion, I should, without this evidence, have deemed impossible.

The perusal of these letters added inconceivably to my veneration for my cousin. The value of her love was augmented a thousand fold. I vowed, with new ardour, to devote my thoughts and efforts to this purpose. That Sidney had already been rejected, inspired new hopes; but the proofs of her intellectual and moral attainments which these manuscripts contained, tended to discourage me.

The perusal of these letters, and the reflections to which they gave birth, occupied the whole night. The new attractions which the image of this lady had acquired, and the expectation of a meeting the next day, filled me with intense musing, and a tremulous impatience. These tremors increased as the hour of her arrival approached, and I

entered Wallace's house in a state of trepidation and embarrassment too painful to be long endured.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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